THE SHAKERITE

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What If?

Shaker joins search for a lockdown alternative.

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PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY WILL MCKNIGHT

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We Need Pep Rallies. Now.

Stop me if you've heard this before.

Our high school is a tale of two Shakers. Students self-segregate year after year, preferring their homogenous racial groups to integrated interaction. Friend groups are determined less by common interests and more by what side of the tracks you're from. Any student who has walked through the cafeteria, or the senior lounge, or an AP classroom, or a CP classroom, or a football locker room, or a hockey locker room, or a school dance, or the hallway during school, or a sidewalk after school, or really anywhere in this school can see the divide.

We obsess over diversity and its value, but our obsession with differences creates a culture focused on what separates us. Contrary to the photos on the district website, our diversity is not milk and honey; it's water and oil.

Shane McKeon
Print Editor in Chief

This polarity hurts school spirit. Students identify with one of two Shakers, so our collective school spirit for "one" Shaker evaporates. Then it spirals: with less spirit, having spirit becomes less "cool," prompting fewer students to be spirited, and so on.

With less school spirit, the two Shakers drift further apart, clinging to group identity instead of school identity.

But we can take steps to close this gap. The easiest: Bring back pep rallies.

Principal Michael Griffith rightfully ended pep rallies about a decade ago when fighting, hazing and other bad behavior made them unsafe and unruly; at the final rally, a student threw an egg at Griffith, missing him by only a few feet.

This past August, though, Superintendent Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr. held his first all-staff convocation. Teachers, bused to the high school, walked across the front lawn, where the marching band played "Proud Mary," "Moves Like Jagger" and the high school fight song -- twice.

"I wanted them to feel like they're going to the Super Bowl," Hutchings said. If that's not a pep rally, I don't know what is.

In October, Student Council held a pep rally. Homecoming Fest was a pep rally; I don't care what verbal calisthenics you do to say otherwise -- and it was a complete success. No fighting, no hazing, no eggs. Council modified the format wisely, holding it after school and allowing community members to attend.

It may have been the greatest thing Student Council has ever done. Though I cringed at the euphemistic language -- "That concludes our spirit program!" -- it was a rare occasion I felt I lived in "one Shaker," among the mostly-white crowd rallying the mostly-black football team. I was so proud of my school.

When it was over, I wanted to look forward to the next one, but I couldn't; there wouldn't be one, at least during my time in Shaker. The next night at Homecoming, students took photos and danced with kids from their Shaker, and the Shaker from the pep rally divided into two. Next Monday, I shuffled from AP class to AP class, sat with my white friends at lunch and then went home to my white parents. It's not that I avoid the other Shaker; my life is built entirely within my Shaker, and I have no alternative.

A pep rally would let kids become one Shaker. In that gym, we are all united behind the same cause. There is no talk of differences or divisions; we are too focused on what unifies us. We are too focused on supporting our peers, our school. Our Shaker.

So Mr. Griffith: Let us unite. Let us collaborate to establish a system that fits both of our riteria. Let Student Council organize and conduct pep rallies modeled after Homecoming Fest. Now.

Students: If you want pep rallies, speak up. Use your voice. Share this article, send a Tweet, post on Instagram, email your assistant principal or Mr. Griffith and tell your friends, tell your parents, tell everyone what you want and why.

It'll be hard to close the gap between the two Shakers, and this is not a panacea. But it is a no-brainer.

WILL MCKNIGHT//THE SHAKERITE

Junior Maahiy Abdul-zahi trains for upcoming jiu-jitsu matches. His gym of choice is named "Izzah," Arabic for honor. Abdul-zahi hopes to someday compete in regional, national and then maybe UFC professional competition. "There's not a day in my life that I don't think about fighting," he said. "It is just what I do, and I love it." See the full photo gallery at shakerite.com.

The 'Difficult Years'

ANDREW BOYLE//THE SHAKERITE

Shaker Heights Middle School staff face IB implementation, a new retention policy and a building full of 12- and 13-year-olds as they attempt to improve both the school's state report card rating and reputation.

Looking at what shapes Shaker's lowest-ranked school

JOHN VODREY AND ABBY WHITE
CAMPUS AND CITY EDITORS

The Great Mace Incident of 2011 occurred during the middle of the school day, in the middle of the school, at Shaker Heights Middle School.

A female seventh grader brought mace spray to school to retaliate against another girl for an out-of-school disagreement. In a hallway near the cafeteria, she sprayed the girl, she sprayed bystanders and she sprayed teachers who tried to intervene. Ambulances arrived at the Shaker Boulevard campus, and the incident has immortalized itself in Shaker memory.

Such extreme events happen rarely at SHMS, but they contribute to the middle school's poor reputation. The middle school has also performed the worst of all Shaker buildings on the state report card since at least 2009. It had eight infractions resulting in suspensions or expulsions in the first 17 weeks of school this year, more than any other building. According to a district survery, just 55 percent of middle school students find their courses challenging.

Of the Shaker Heights City School District's eight schools, the middle school has the worst reputation. Over the past quarter, The Shakerite's Campus and City section investigated why that's the case, and what's being done to fix it.

State Report Card

One reason for the middle school's negative reputation is the the Ohio Department of Education's annual report card. The most recent report card, released in August 2013, gave SHMS an F for three of its value-added scores: overall, disabled and the lowest 20 percent of students. Value-added scores measure students' improvement during the school year, based on tests given at the beginning and end of that year. Besides the middle school's three F's, the most any other Shaker school earned was one.

Two C's rounded out the middle school's rating, one for the annual measurable objective, also known as gap closing, which takes into account students' reading and math scores and graduation rate, and the other for its gifted value-added score. The middle school met three of its five standards, earning a 60 percent and D in that category. All other Shaker schools met 100 percent of standards.

"Then you're sent here, and now, boom! Nine classes, you're on your own, you have to get a feel for nine different teachers' expectations and styles."

DANNY YOUNG

Other local school districts lacked the same gaps in ratings between their middle schools and their other buildings. Orange City's Ballard Brady Middle School had higher ratings than its elementary school, while Chagrin Falls' middle school and elementary school were ranked almost identically. Of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights district's three middle schools — Roxboro, Frank L. Wiley and Monticello — Monticello was tied with an elementary school for the district's worst rankings, but Wiley was ranked highest.

Superintendent Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr. said the state places too much emphasis on its end-of-year assessments. "We're looking at one test date. So you have one bad day. Anything could have happened that day. That one day now determines how effective your year was," Hutchings said.

He explained the school shouldn't be judged on one test, just like a student shouldn't be. "They don't look at all the factors that come into play: maybe you made it to school every single day, maybe you did your homework every single day, maybe

you did have a relationship with your teacher, maybe you did have a job," Hutchings said. "None of those things are a part of the rating."

"It's an important factor — don't get me wrong — but it's just one piece to this puzzle," he said.

Middle School Principal Danny Young agreed. "I just think it's one snapshot. It doesn't give the full school experience," he said. "We're going to tackle it and work hard to close the achievement gap and improve our status."

Transition

Young thinks his school performed poorly on the report card in part because of the "tough transition" between Woodbury Elementary School and the middle school. At Woodbury, "you're escorted and walked to every class" and there are five transitions.

"Then you're sent here, and now, boom! Nine classes, you're on your own, you have to get a feel for nine different teachers' expectations and styles," Young said.

"Some kids hit the ground running because they're organized, they're motivated, they have a system in place, they know how to go from class to class and write down their assignments; they know how to advocate for themselves. And we have some students that need a bit more support with that."

Seventh grader Esmé Alexander-Jaffe agrees that middle school students face challenges because "it's a lot different from Woodbury and elementary school," she said. "It's a lot harder."

Shaker parent Chris Ramsay, whose three children attended the middle school, also saw difficulties in the transition. "There's this huge transition for the kids," he said. "For a lot, homework is an issue, focus is an issue, and the social stuff becomes more and more a part of their daily lives."

According to "Measuring What Matters," the district's profile of its schools, 55 percent of middle school students say their classes are challenging. That number is 70 percent for Woodbury and 78 percent for the high school.

Young pointed out that while Woodbury has 57-minute classes and the high school has 50-minute classes, the middle school only has 39-minute classes. "I think that's a big goal as far as we need to improve on instructional time," he said.

"Every transitional year, you see a little dip [in test scores], and you see it come back up that next year. I think that's across districts. I think that's not a Shaker thing, I think that's a school-wide, school district thing," Young said. "We're having more transitional programs to sort of ease the anxiety of kids as they move building to building, and I know that's a big goal and initiative for the future."

Hutchings agreed, saying, "One area that I had a concern about is the transition from Woodbury to the middle school and the transition from the middle school to the high school. I think that we need more of a robust transition program or process, because I don't know if we're having enough collaboration with our teachers."

ANDREW BOYLE//THE SHAKERITE

Danny Young has been the middle school's principal for four years, having previously served as a school counselor and a third grade teacher. Next year, he will replace Randall Yates as principal of Woodbury Elementary School.

"There's this huge transition for the kids. For a lot, homework is an issue, focus is an issue, and the social stuff becomes more and more a part of their daily lives."

CHRIS RAMSAY

Consolidating schools would lessen the number of difficult transitions. However, "It's nothing that's on the table today," Hutchings said. "But I think it is something that we can definitely have discussions about for the future because from what I've heard, a lot of the parents have a concern about going from the K-4 to a 5-6 then to a 7-8 then to a 9-12, and they feel that the moment the school really gets to know their child at Woodbury and the middle school, then it's time to transition to a new building. They have to start all over."

Hutchings said combining buildings is not under discussion for the five-year strategic plan the district is developing. However, Young said, "I think, in the near future, I could see Shaker moving towards fewer transitions."

Developmental Age

Another reason for the subpar state report card, according to Hutchings and Young, is that the middle school comprises 12- and 13-year-olds who are maturing.

"You're trying to figure out where you fit in, as far as, you're trying to figure out which group you'll kind of grow close to. 'Who are my friends? What's my niche going to be?' Your bodies are changing. Everything is just kind of going haywire internally," Young said.

Hutchings agreed. "I think that the developmental phase of the middle school is a very important factor that we have to put into consideration with everything," he said.

At middle school students' ages, social media gains importance as well. "There's all this bizz-buzz that happens at that age online and then gets to school," Ramsay said. "So there's that complexity that's in the mix now too, which makes it even tougher."

Hutchings said SHMS is "just like any other middle school . . . Through my experiences, in regards to what happens in the middle school here, it's what happens across the country. Kids are at the same developmental age in their lives. You still have the same issues with students who don't like other students and cliques — it's the same type of issues. There's nothing that I believe, at our middle school, that's so abnormal from any other typical middle school."

Hutchings said that in every district he's worked in, "the middle school has always been the most challenging. And I think a lot of that is because of that developmental piece. I really do." He said middle school is "always the focus, wherever you go."

However, students' developmental ages are a hard task to tackle. "I don't know if

there's a pill we can swallow to fix it," said Hutchings, who does, however, think the district can be more "proactive" in dealing with it. He would like faculty to hold discussions with students to help them understand "why some of these things are happening," he said. "This is normal to be trying to figure out who you are. This is normal to be on an emotional rollercoaster."

The state grades schools on the number of standards met, the performance index, the annual measurable objectives grade and overall value-added and value-added subcategories -- gifted, disabled and the lowest 20 percent of students.

HOW OHIO RATES OUR SCHOOLS

	HIGH SCHOOL	MIDDLE SCHOOL	WOOD BURY	ELEMENTARY AVERAGE
A	1	0	5	1.8
B	1	1	1	2.6
C	1	2	0	1.8
D	1	1	0	0.4
F	1	3	1	0.4

JOSH JACOBS//THE SHAKERITE

Behavior

Students' developmental ages play a role in behavior at the middle school. "Research says, scientifically, you begin to have emotional changes, which causes you to have an attitude one day, and the next day you're fine," Hutchings said.

However, other sources of bad behavior exist at SHMS as well. Ramsay believes that teachers currently lack the necessary tools to handle bad behavior, and that some students take advantage of that.

Ramsay mentioned a field trip he attended at a movie theater with one of his children's classes.

"Teachers "had to separate all the kids . . . so they didn't poke and prod each other. But there was seat jumping like an Olympic event, there were people on their phones and throwing food."

Ramsay said he told his concerns about the students' behavior to a teacher, who responded, " 'Oh, this is pretty good.' "

Young said students often become "squirrelly" on field trips. He said teachers "most definitely care about behavior."

In an attempt to improve behavior at the middle school, Hutchings hired a Response to Intervention specialist before this school year. He said he brought RTI specialists to many districts he worked in before as well.

In an email interview, the RTI specialist, Robert McMahon, said he has "many of the same duties and responsibilities as the two assistant principals. I would estimate that 65-75 percent of a typical day for me involves handling student discipline and student affair issues in an effort to assist and support the assistant principals."

According to data provided by Young, as of April 16 the middle school had suspended 143 students and expelled one this school year. All of last school year there were 147 suspensions and three expulsions. In the 2011-12 school year they suspended 214 students and expelled two.

"Our goal is to keep kids in class, because if they're not in class, they're not learning, therefore the odds of them doing well on the tests kind of decreases. So we're making a concerted effort, when at all possible, to keep kids in class," Young said.

Eighth grade English department chairman Ronald Grosel said testing is a concern when addressing behavior.

"They don't want to suspend or expel kids because of the testing," he said. If administrators do suspend or expel a student, the student "misses out on all the teaching and then they're not going to do well on the test." Grosel added that he thinks there's a good balance. "If a kid needs to be out of here, they're going to be out of here," he said.

Young said it's important to ensure "that we provide [disciplined] kids with the work. So the teachers will provide the work for the kids while they're out on suspension or in-school [detention]."

Grosel said McMahon has helped. "For example, he's put together a list of people who are chronically late to class. If they're late, it goes directly to him and he deals with them immediately." Grosel said the list includes about 15 students. "Those kids are getting to class."

"Having more people is definitely better. More security guards would be even better," Grosel said. SHMS currently has three security guards. "The more people that can take care of what's going on, the better."

Grosel has worked at SHMS for seven years. "To be honest, since I've been here there hasn't been a lot of fighting. There's some hallway issues," he said.

Alexander-Jaffe disagreed. In March 2013, reflecting on her past six months of seventh grade, she said fights occurred "almost every week."

"In Woodbury, if two kids got into a fight, it would be broken up immediately," she said, adding that is not the case at SHMS.

Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr.

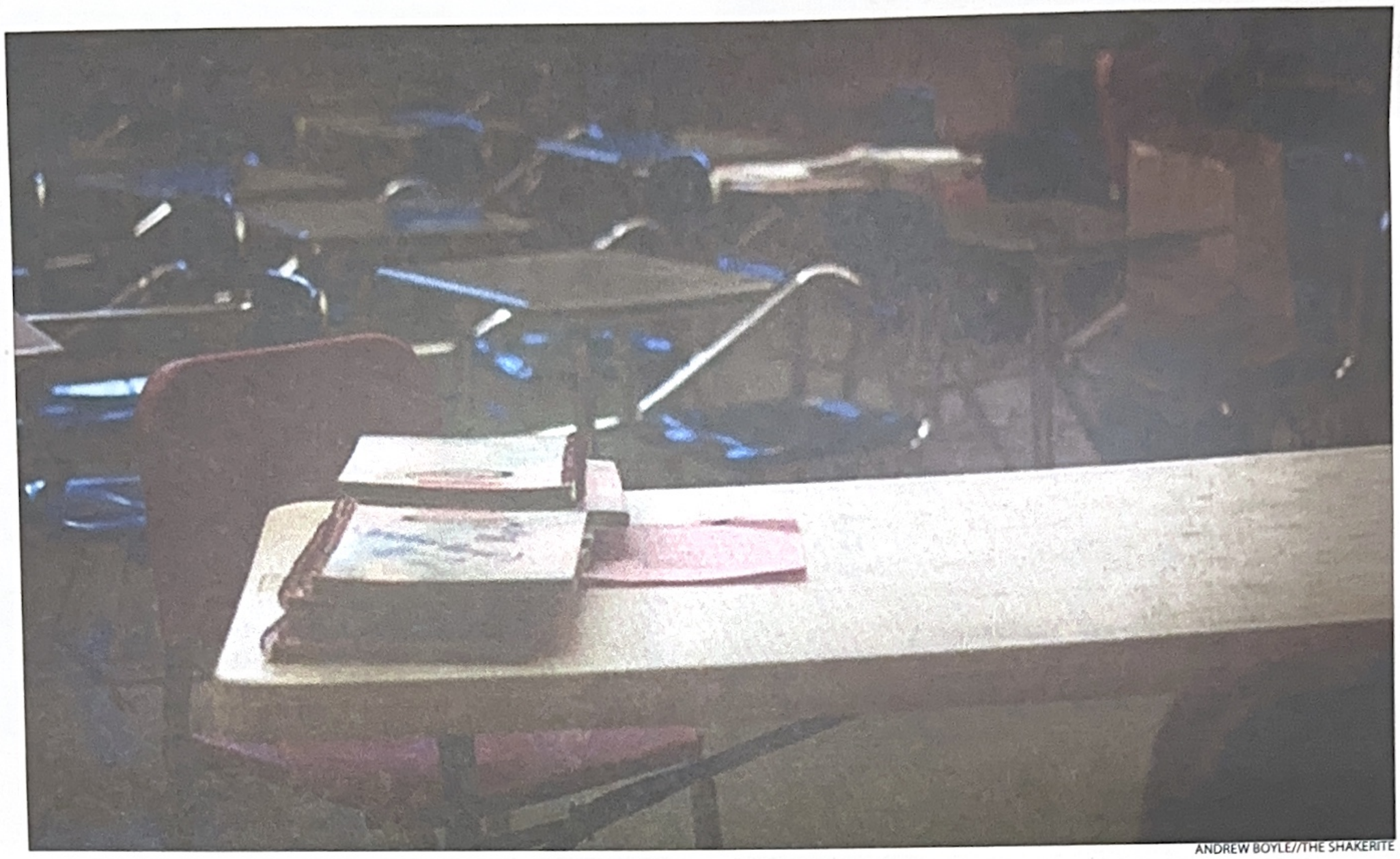
Alexander-Jaffe suggested that teachers pay closer attention to students who get into fights. "It's usually the same kids that get into fights," she said. "I feel like [teachers] shouldn't be all over them, but they should watch them."

Young said McMahon gave the leaders of each seventh and eighth grade team a list of "kids most likely not to score 'proficient,' " with charts of 'Best Practices' in math, English and behavior management. "We asked [the team leaders] to go back to their teams during their team-leader meetings to talk about what strategy can they implement with those kids and track during a six-week period and see if they make some gains and some differences with kids. So we meet every month and talk about, 'Is it working? Is it not working? What should we do differently?'"

"Behavior with middle school aged children is often a challenge, and my goal is to counsel students to make good choices when it comes to their behavior," McMahon said. "Discipline and consequences should be more than punitive in nature. I believe discipline must include a reflective element

ANDREW BOYLE//THE SHAKERITE

Every interviewee agreed that the transition between Woodbury and the middle school is difficult. Superintendent Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr. would like to develop a more "robust transition program or process, because I don't know if we're having enough collaboration with our teachers."



ANDREW BOYLE//THE SHAKERITE

Superintendent Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr. said that in some middle school classes, "particularly some of our CP classes at the middle school, I'm seeing a lot of low-level work happening in the classroom." He said he sees this problem "in different pockets throughout Shaker schools," not just in the middle school.

that encourages students to think about what they did, take responsibility for their actions, and learn a lesson so the misbehavior is not repeated."

Young said McMahon has "done a phenomenal job with supporting kids as far as responding to their learning needs."

Both Young and Grosel said they would be in favor of the district hiring another RTI specialist for the middle school. Hutchings said he would have to analyze data at the end of the year to see if that would be worthwhile.

Social Promotion

Hutchings announced he was ending social promotion at the middle school last August. The district's retention policy allowed students to progress to the next grade even if they failed one or more of their classes.

Social promotion was never an official policy. The Board of Education amended its previous retention policy, written in 1987, in April. "The decision to promote, retain or accelerate will be made by the building principal following consultation with the teacher/s and the parent/guardian," the previous policy said. "The parent/guardian has the right to appeal the recommendation to the Superintendent's designee."

Hutchings said he thought the general language of this board policy allowed social promotion to take place. Asked why the board waited more than six months to change the official policy, Hutchings said the revised policy incorporates "some of the state mandates that have changed, we had to adopt some of the state language into that policy."

One middle school teacher provided The Shakerite with a document summarizing the school's Feb. 10 "Building Leadership Meeting." "Retention discussed w/ upper management. Draft of process planned to be in place by end of 4th quarter," the document stated.

Grosel, who was at the meeting as the eighth grade English department chairman, said that was the first time teachers saw anything about the new retention policy in writing. "Early on there wasn't quite a plan. Say first quarter. So a parent would call in, and a counselor wouldn't know what the actual plan was. It was just kind of, 'This is the idea, this is what we want to do, but nothing set in stone,' " he said.

However, Grosel said teachers are not doing much differently now that social promotion is over.

"They're doing their thing: making phone calls, having conferences, giving kids missing assignments. But the difference is now when they come in, there's an urgency for them. 'Oh, we might not go to the high school, so we're actually going to do the work, we're going to come in to conferences,' " Grosel said.

"We want them ready for the high school. That's the bottom line. If they're not ready, they're not going," Grosel said.

Young said he doesn't think teachers feel pressure to pass students so they won't be retained. "I think they feel validated. I think they feel like, 'Man, my subject matter really counts, and now the kids kind of have to meet me halfway and really do the work,' " he said.

"Pretty much it was up to parents previously" whether their students were retained, Young said. "We might make a few recommendations [to retain kids], but then a parent could say, 'No, that's OK, I don't want that,' and they moved on."

The revised policy does not mention parents. "The promotion of each student is determined individually. The decision to promote or retain a student is made on the basis of the following factors. The teacher takes into consideration: reading skill, mental ability, age, physical maturity, emotional and social development, social issues, home conditions and grade average," it states.

"Now we have more specifics as to how a student can be promoted, how a student cannot be promoted. Now we have more specifics so that we're being more consistent with our practices, and people have a better understanding as to what our expectations are for promotion and retention," Hutchings said.

Grosel supports the move because he thinks socially-promoted students haven't been prepared for the high school. In 2013, 74 freshmen were held back for failing one or more classes, about 15 percent of the grade. "I think there are too many students who don't take their education seriously, and in the past, there hadn't been any repercussions; they would always go to the high school. So we could tell them you're not going to be able to do this at the high school, but they wouldn't listen," he said.

Ramsay agreed. While his children attended the middle school, "there was a sense that, you know, sometimes [students] figure out, 'Well, my grades really don't count, and I'm going to get put up to the next grade no matter what.' There was no real threat of, 'They'll force us to repeat,' or something like that," he said.

By the Numbers

78 percent
of high school students feel challenged by their courseloads

70 percent
of Woodbury students feel challenged in school

55 percent
of middle school students feel challenged in their classes

Source: "Measuring What Matters," Shaker Heights City School District

ANDREW BOYLE//THE SHAKERITE

Although eighth grade Language and Literature teacher Ronald Grosel said he hasn't seen much fighting at the middle school as a teacher, seventh grader Esmé Alexander-Jaffe said fights occur "almost every week" and that unlike at Woodbury, they are normally not "broken up immediately."

District Communications Director Peggy Caldwell said she was unaware of any data the district keeps on the number of students socially promoted at the middle school.

Mark Storz is a professor in John Carroll University's education department, the associate dean for graduate studies in JCU's College of Arts and Sciences and a former middle school principal. He opposes social promotion. "When we socially promote kids, we really give them a false sense that they've mastered the knowledge and the skills that they need for later success," he said. "That's going to affect their performance in high school and, quite frankly, it's going to affect their performance in college."

Social promotion also disadvantages teachers, Storz said. "If I'm in a classroom with eighth graders, and I've got eighth graders in there who are doing eighth-grade work, but then I also have these folks that have been socially promoted without the knowledge and the skills to do eighth-grade work, and I've got both of these groups of children in my classroom, it makes my teaching really hard because of the different needs that these kids are going to have," he said.

However, Storz said exceptions exist. "There are some students who, for whatever reason, need to be socially promoted, and I think that kind of stuff happens on a case by case basis, and the principal, the teachers, the guidance counselors can make those kinds of decisions," he said.

Hutchings agrees and, accordingly, has not ended social promotion entirely. "Social promotion is appropriate for certain situations," he said. He gave the example of a 15-year-old who transferred into Shaker's seventh grade this year from another school district. The school is exercising "alternative ways" to raise that student up to grade level as quickly as possible, including online learning and a tutor, and the student will likely be socially promoted at the end of the year to a grade more appropriate for his age. "He may not ever catch up, but maybe he'll only be one year behind, versus two," Hutchings said.

Seventh grade social studies teacher Michael Sears said student age is a concern. "The challenge becomes, with this age group, do we really want a 16-year-old driving to the seventh grade?" he said. "That may be an extreme example, but there are social and emotional issues about retaining kids at this age."

Hutchings said state law recommends that schools not retain students more than twice during elementary school and more than once during middle school, "so the law really prohibits you from retaining kids over and over . . . Anytime a student is being retained multiple times, there's another issue," he said. "So I think it's our responsibility as a school district, as educators, to try to identify what those barriers are."

However, most students failing classes will not be granted exceptions. As such, the district has instituted new measures to keep students on track this year.

Hutchings explained that SHMS alerted families of students who had failing grades in the first four and a half weeks of school, asking them to encourage students to attend tutoring and conferences. At nine weeks, the school contacted struggling students' parents again, and had guidance counselors talk to the students. After the second quarter's progress report was sent home, SHMS contacted students' families again and Hutchings held an assembly for those students at school. Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education Marla Robinson sent out a plan about "how we're trying to serve or meet [students'] needs so they can finish school and pass" at the end of first semester.

Young said that as of April 8, 132 students are at risk of being retained. "That's not bad out of 860 kids," he said. "Do I want any number? No, but we've got to be realistic. Some kids aren't going to do their homework." He said he expects fewer than 50 students will be retained at the end of the school year, and that in five years, "probably none" will be retained.

"That's just my gut," Young said. "Can I guarantee that? I can't guarantee anything."

"What I think is going to happen after a year or two of this, I think the message is going to go out, and it's going to change the perception that the middle school really does count," Young said.

Grosel agreed. "I think we're starting to see it a little bit, but I still think people don't quite believe it," he said. He said he thinks one round of students will have to be retained before everyone believes it. "Next year I think the word will get out, 'They're not kidding, they're going to hold you back,' " he said.

IB MYP

SHMS is in the process of implementing the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme, which comprises grades five through 10. The district has already been certified for IB Diploma Programme, grades 11 and 12, and Primary Years Programme, grades kindergarten through fourth. The district will apply for MYP approval in October and will hear back from IB in spring 2015.

In a September interview, Hutchings said the district was one semester behind in the MYP certification process.

"I personally believe that IB is very well aligned with exemplary middle school practice," said JCU's Storz, who has documented the Cleveland Heights-University Heights school district's IB implementation. "IB really provides opportunities for students to be engaged in their learning, and when students are engaged, they're actively participating, and when they're actively participat-

"Next year, I think the word will get out, 'They're not kidding, they're going to hold you back.' "
RONALD GROSEL

ANDREW BOYLE//THE SHAKERITE

To better instruction, Superintendent Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr. wants to give teachers more professional development. English teacher Ronald Grosel said teachers aren't eager to miss school for professional development because SHMS has "awful subs."

ing, there is the potential for much higher levels of learning and thinking and developing many of the 21st-century skills that we talk a lot about in our field."

Alexander-Jaffe said she and most of her classmates find interactive learning more "fun" and effective. However, she does not think IB is accomplishing that.

So far, she thinks IB feels forced, rather than well-integrated. "I feel a lot of people find it annoying," she said. She said SHMS is "trying to make everything about IB," but "I feel like if someone asked someone to describe IB, they wouldn't know how."

Grosel thinks students are "a little leary of it, but just because it's challenging, and they know it's work and it's not easy."

Storz said that early on in IB implementation, "a student could see it as being forced, when in reality, let's stick with it for a few years, and as it becomes more fully implemented over the course of one, two or three years, it'll make more sense. I know that's the case in Cleveland Heights," which is in its second year of implementation. SHMS has been implementing IB MYP for four and a half years.

Dexter Lindsey, the middle school's MYP coordinator, viewed students' dissatisfaction with IB differently. "Our students are adolescents," he wrote in an email in February. "Developmentally, it would be uncharacteristic for them to share with us that they like MYP."

Storz understands Lindsey's opinion, stating that "at the time I was principal [of a middle school], I probably would've said something very similar to what that teacher said. Sometimes it does seem like young adolescents have difficulty with change."

However, he said all people find dealing with change difficult, not just adolescents: "I think that's true of a lot of us across the lifespan . . . I'm guessing that there are a lot of students who, as time goes by, are really going to appreciate the IB because of the way in which it's meant to engage them," he said.

"With any big change, it takes time to implement it fully and sometimes, along the way, it doesn't always look like it makes sense," Storz said. "But if we go through the process of change, at the end of that process, it works."

Making IB work at the middle school is Hutchings' goal. He hopes integrating IB will raise instructional quality there. "I think that if we can have good instructional practices in our classrooms, if we can get our authorization for IB MYP . . . if we can begin discussions around some non-negotiables as to what needs to happen in all classes at the middle school regardless of what your teacher's teaching or who you are, that we're going to get the biggest bang for our buck," he said.

Young also believes IB will improve classroom instruction.

Grosel supports IB because it makes teaching more uniform. "In the past too many people were doing their own thing. While that's good for maybe that group of students, it's not good for everyone throughout the whole school," he said.

Storz believes IB's emphasis on interactive learning and its "interdisciplinary nature" between units of study make it a worthwhile curriculum. However, he thinks such components "are also part of good middle school practice." He did not know enough about SHMS to comment on its faculty or teaching methods, but said that rather than replacing curricula, in a good middle school, IB "just reinforces what good middle school practice is."

The only distinction between MYP and good middle school practice is "global-mindedness," Storz said. "The inclusion of languages, the inclusion of the study of culture across the disciplines, I think that's a distinguishing piece that's important for a lot of American students. We tend to be pretty isolated compared to other countries in the world."

"If teachers really engage the IB philosophy, and if they really work to implement the type of teaching that IB encourages, then I think the kids will begin to see really positive changes," Storz said. He believes that providing teachers with professional development opportunities such as attending conferences and visiting other IB schools is necessary to implement IB effectively, because IB is also new to teachers, not just students. He said professional development helps teachers "understand and implement a change."

Storz believes IB will benefit SHMS in the end. "I wouldn't want to suggest that IB is going to make things better because that's saying things aren't good, and I'm not in a position to say that," he said. "But I certainly think IB has the potential to enhance what's going on in the middle school."

Substitutes

According to Grosel, the middle school's substitute teachers are "awful."

"For me personally, I try to never be absent. And I'm not, except when I have to do professional development," he said. "They're asking us to do more and more [for IB, RTI and Common Core]. It's kind of a given that when you're gone, nothing gets done."

Grosel said teachers worry about their students doing worse on end-of-year assessments, which are part of their teacher evaluations. "The more you're out, the less your kids know, the worse they do on the test, the more it affects you," he said.

Young said he hears concerns about substitutes from teachers frequently. "Every year we're going to try to decrease the number of times teachers are out of the classroom" for professional development, he said. "They're not out just twiddling their thumbs. Every time they're out, there's a specific, targeted reason."

Grosel agreed: "Based on what's going on [with IB, RTI and Common Core], it's necessary."

Grosel and Young both said that the district's best substitutes are typically hired as full-time teachers.

Because they don't want to miss class, Grosel said the English department is devoting the first two weeks of summer to tailoring its curriculum to the PARCC exam, which tests achievement of Common Core standards. "I think using summertime is a good option," he said, but added that it's difficult to get every member of a depart-

ANDREW BOYLE//THE SHAKERITE

Superintendent Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr. ended social promotion in August 2013. As of April 8, middle school principal Danny Young said 132 middle schoolers are at risk of being retained. He said he expects fewer than 50 students will end up retained at the end of the year.

ANDREW BOYLE//THE SHAKERITE

Seventh grader Esmé Alexander-Jaffe said the middle school is "trying to make everything about IB," but she feels "a lot of people find it annoying."

ment to agree to forgo vacation time.

Instruction

Hutchings said he goes to SHMS around twice a month and frequently visits classes. "In some of our classes, I'm not going to say all, particularly some of our CP classes at the middle school, I'm seeing a lot of low-level work happening in the classroom," he said. "I think it's important for us to provide high-level, higher thinking, critical thinking and analytical skills in classes regardless of what level it is. And that's one thing that I'm not seeing consistently throughout the building, so that's a concern."

However, Hutchings said he sees this "in different pockets throughout Shaker schools," not just in the middle school. He said he thinks the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System's accountability system will allow him "to address that."

"I also think that as we move forward into the next five years, with our five-year strategic plan, because we have a focus on instruction and establishing protocols on how to teach our kids, that we're going to see some commonalities in regards to teaching practices throughout Shaker, throughout the entire district, and we won't just see it in pockets," he said.

"I see a lot of good instruction. I see a bit of bad instruction, too. I would like to consistently see good instruction no matter what class I go in, no matter what building I'm in, no matter what time of the day it is."

Unlike middle school teachers, Hutchings would like to "provide teachers with more professional learning on how to reach all students in classes . . . [and] how to use data to make instructional decisions in the classroom."

Hutchings said he considers professional development key to improving report card grades at SHMS. He said his 4-year-old son's generation learns in a very different way than his generation did because of changes in technology. "We have to provide our teachers with the skills to meet the needs of that next generation," Hutchings said. "What is it that we have to do to get you all a better conceptual understanding of the material? That is going to be our biggest shift."

Wrap-around services

Social studies teacher Michael Sears said teachers need to have "higher expectations for the kids who are struggling. We have to expect that they're going to be able to focus in class for 30 minutes or 40 minutes and expect that they're going to try their best, and they're going to do some homework, and that there are going to be programs in place to help them so that they're working somewhere between four and six [p.m.]. Something has to be happening between four and six, because when you get to middle school, if there's nothing happening outside the classroom, you're just falling further and further behind.

"I think we sometimes overlook the social-emotional needs of kids in middle school, and if we could improve those needs, the academics would improve," Sears said. "We just have to get kids more involved who aren't in activities or don't have a sport or a club, get them feeling connected."

Young said SHMS is trying to "implement more wrap-around services, more support programs" to help struggling students.

Young gave the example of a new program in which six parents "volunteer to come in during the lunch [and] study halls, to come in and meet with tardy kids who, we've told them, that they probably could work with around organization, around getting their planner filled out, making sure they have a plan to go to conferences that we can see, just so parents can be that facilitator of how to navigate the middle school right now."

Chris Ramsay

Hutchings cited an initiative in which an employee of Bellefaire, a non-profit that provides children with a "variety of behavioral health, substance abuse, education and prevention services," is based full-time at the high school and middle school. That way students have access "in house, whereas in the past, we would refer students to their [Bellefaire's] center."

Young said the employee based at SHMS "can help with the social and emotional needs of the kids to make sure they have some support with their social, emotional help that might translate into the classroom to help them."

Young said the middle school's guidance counselors and administrators each have "10 kids that we take, and we just check in to make sure that, you know, they have what they need, and if there are some barriers that are up that need to be broken down, we'll do what we can to try to break them to, to help them be successful."

Principal

The district announced in March that Young will replace long-time Shaker administrator Randall Yates as principal of Woodbury next year.

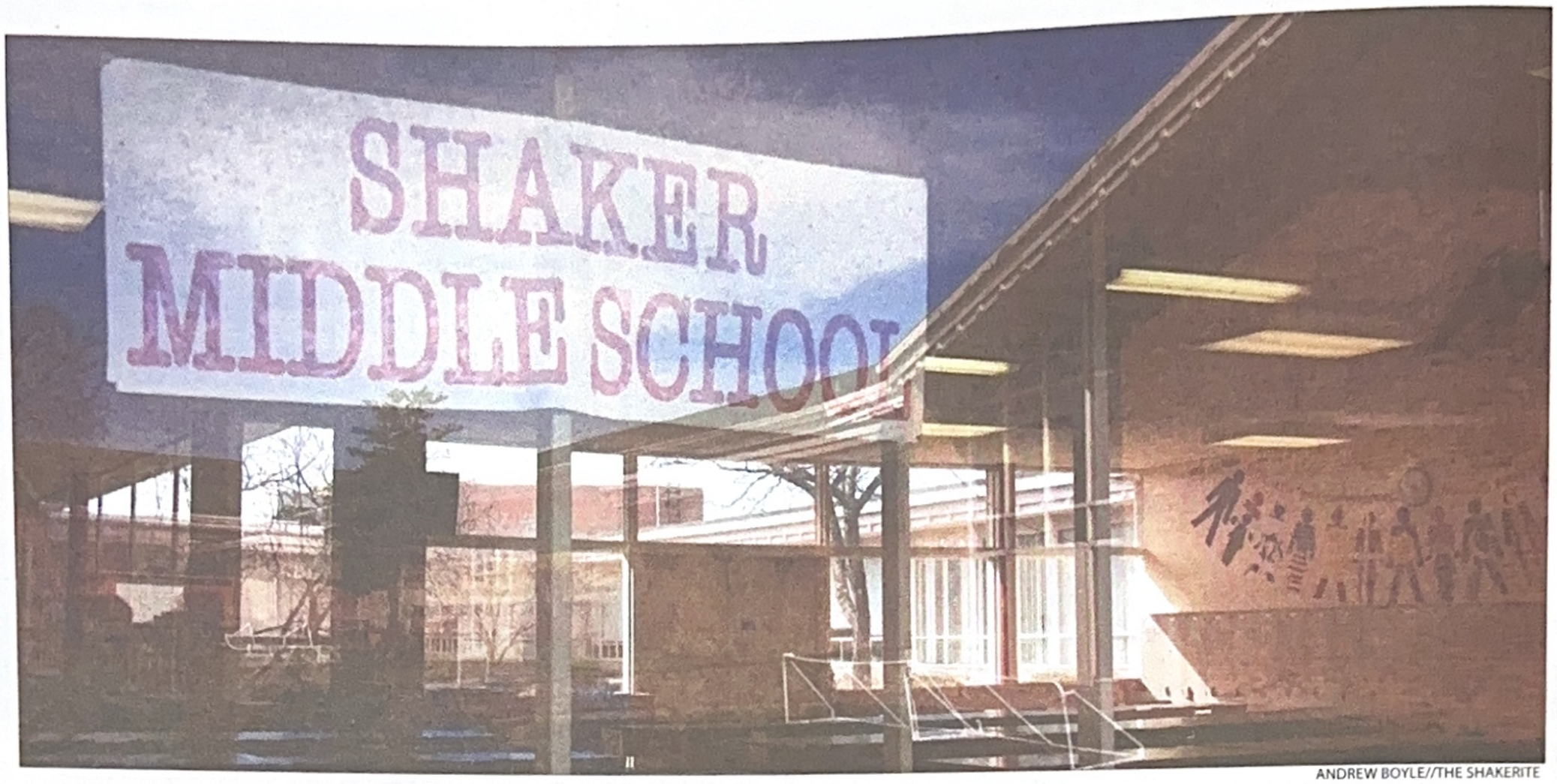
Young's move to Woodbury was part of a larger administrative "reorganization and succession plan." The district has hired a national search firm to find a new middle school principal, assistant superintendent of business and operations, curriculum director and director of technology and media services.

Hutchings said they hired the firm because "these are four very important areas." He said all four jobs focus on areas that the community expressed concern with in the leadership profile for his job. The same firm wrote this profile when the district sought a new superintendent last year.

"We want to get it right so we're not in the position of having to hire somebody [new] three to four years from now," he said. "We can't have people coming and going every couple of years. That would be a disaster."

Asked why he wouldn't hire a new principal at Woodbury and keep Young at SHMS, Hutchings said, "We grappled with posting the position at Woodbury. We wanted to try to provide them with some stability in regards to having an individual that understands Shaker schools, that understands the city, that understands what we're striving for in regards to our fifth and sixth graders, because they're going to the middle school, so we need someone to understand what we're trying to produce."

Hutchings stressed that moving Young to Woodbury was not a pre-determined plan. He said Young's name came up when Hutchings' cabinet discussed the vacancy,



ANDREW BOYLE//THE SHAKERITE

If Middle School Principal Danny Young had to grade the middle school, he said he would give it an A, based off its "plethora of sports clubs, activities that kids can get involved with, to make the middle school experience well-rounded." Superintendent Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr. said he would give it a B- and the district's other schools all B's, saying, "If we had all A's, there would be no point in me being here."

and they decided that Young's seven years as a third-grade teacher at Mercer Elementary School made him a good fit.

Hutchings added that moving Young to Woodbury was not an indictment of his middle school performance. "If he was not good enough for the middle school, if he didn't have the skill set, the knowledge, the ability to be an instructional leader, he wouldn't work in Shaker Heights. I don't believe in moving someone who's ineffective to another building. I believe in moving them out of Shaker City Schools. If you're not good enough for one group of kids, you're not good enough for the other group of kids."

Hutchings said that if Yates had not declared his retirement, Young would have remained at SHMS. "This opportunity opened up. We took advantage of it," he said.

However, Hutchings did not seem to mind that the move creates a vacancy at SHMS. "If we have a perfect candidate that can take Woodbury where we need to go, and will give us the vacancy at the middle school to accomplish what we need there, it's a win-win. He's a perfect fit for what we need in this building, then we go find who we need to run the middle school," Hutchings said.

Hutchings said the middle school needs someone "who is going to be able to put all these different pieces together." He said the pieces include Common Core, IB MYP, negative perception about SHMS and issues associated with developmental age. "It takes a special person with a special skill set to be able to do that."

"Mr. Young was the right person for the time that Mr. Young was there," he said, adding that the decision had nothing to do with state report card grades. "That was not a part of the decision."

"It wasn't really about the middle school for this decision," Hutchings said. "It was about what we needed at Woodbury."

"If we have a perfect candidate that can take Woodbury where we need to go, and will give us the vacancy at the middle school to accomplish what we need there, it's a win-win."

GREGORY C. HUTCHINGS, JR.

Young said he was happy to accept the cabinet's request that he move to Woodbury, and offered some advice for his successor: "Be open-minded, love the kids, listen, try to reach consensus, use data to make decisions and just work as hard as you can."

Young is also head coach of the high school men's basketball team. Hutchings said he has talked to Young about his balancing of basketball and his full-time job. "As long as the principalship is always the priority, and that doesn't interfere with your role and your responsibility as a principal, I can support that," he said.

Young said he hasn't considered giving up coaching. "That's my outlet, that's fun. It keeps me — IB word — balanced," he said. "I use that as a way to get kids to school. All my kids go to college."

Grades

Hutchings said he would give SHMS a B- compared to the district's other schools, which he gave straight B's. He based this on "outreach we do to our parents, the opportunities we offer our students, the academics we provide for our students, the skills that our teachers have, the supports that we have for our teachers, the discipline, the safety."

"If we had all A's, there would be no point in me being here," he said. Hutchings would not rule out having same-sex classes, uniforms or replacing administrators and teachers to improve SHMS. "I'm open to anything that will provide a better learning environment for our students."

Young said he would give the middle school an A. "I think the best thing is the arts, the choices in levels that kids have. I think we have a plethora of sports clubs, activities that kids can get involved with, to make the middle school experience well-rounded, just not academics, you know, math, studies, social science, English," Young said.

"Kids can find their niche," he said. "We have a lot of different things that people can get involved in besides sports, and the sports just make it that much more meaningful for kids."

"Not many schools offer three, offer four foreign languages for kids every single day. I have a lot of friends who are administrators of other middle schools and foreign languages are offered every other day. We offer Mandarin Chinese, French, Spanish and Latin every single day," Young said.

Grosel, eighth grade English chairman, said he would give SHMS a B. "There's a lot of good things going on, there's a lot of new things going on. There's a lot of people [faculty] working hard, and we have a lot of good students."

Courageous conversations

Two SHMS teachers declined interview requests for this story in person. One guidance counselor referred comment to Caldwell, the district's communications director, while another did not return phone and email requests for an interview.

When asked if she would be willing to be interviewed, one of the teachers said she was afraid if she spoke candidly she would lose her job.

Hutchings said she had nothing to fear. "I would never fire a teacher for speaking up. Actually, I would encourage it," he said.

"The culture that I'm trying to lead, facilitate, is a culture of transparency and courageous conversations. What I tell our teachers, our administrators, our cabinet members, is that if we are not open and honest about things, then we're not going to grow, and we're going to keep on producing the same stuff," Hutchings said.

"We have to stop pretending like everything is perfect, because no one's perfect."

GREGORY C. HUTCHINGS

Superintendent Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr. tweeted this photo of himself putting a pro-levy sign in his front yard. This is Hutchings' first levy as superintendent, and the district is asking for the lowest millage, 6.9 mills, in more than a decade. The vote is May 6.

Vote 'Yes' on May 6

If you move to Shaker Heights, you know what you're getting.

You know that the city has quality schools, but that quality comes with a cost. You know that it's a "residential community," a town without enough businesses to handle most of the tax burden, and it requires higher property taxes to maintain strong schools. But you also know that, as a teacher paraphrased former Superintendent Mark Freeman at a board of education meeting earlier this year, "You get what you pay for."

And sometimes you need to pay a little more.

Only 10 percent of Shaker's tax revenue comes from local businesses; compare that to 30 percent in Solon and 50 percent in Beachwood. In other words, because we don't have a mall to tax, homeowners must foot most of the bill for quality schools.

It can be a big bill. Homeowners in this school district pay the highest property tax rate in Ohio, a tax rate that will likely surpass four percent if this levy passes. The owner of a $200,000 home will pay $483 more each year, bringing his or her total to $8,076 per annum.

We don't love this approach, but unless there are plans to build a mall in the Fernway neighborhood, this is the best way to maintain our schools.

"We are all homeowners, too," Board member Annette Tucker Sutherland said. "We are very aware" of the tax burden placed on Shaker residents.

In addition, Superintendent Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., has emphasized cost efficiency much more than his predecessor. When the board revealed the levy would be 6.9 mills -- the last four had all exceeded nine -- teachers gave board members and Hutchings an ear full.

Rite Idea

"A 6.9-mill levy is not enough," one teacher said. "You cannot create great success on the cheap."

Another said, "We cannot let a fear of millage prevent us [from] providing the world-class education Shaker is renowned for."

We believe some taxpayers would disagree that the district is funded "on the cheap."

This levy is a necessary evil, but its more modest cost reflects a healthy reconsideration of Shaker homeowners' role in funding the schools. The district is asking for less, and they've said they won't ask again for four years. Over that time, the district is also cutting costs elsewhere, $1 million each year for the next five years.

If voters pass the levy, the district can continue to provide students a world-class education. If voters fail it, the district would need to cut 5 percent of its budget, the equivalent of at least 50 staff members.

Voters cannot afford to fail this levy. But they can afford to pass it.

How Much is Too Much?

American students now do twice as much homework as they did in 1982, and the burden is taking a toll

ALEXANDRA HARRIS AND
ELLA SHLONSKY OPINION EDITORS

In 1995 in the small town of Half Moon Bay, California, a member of the school board proposed abolishing homework from the district's schools.

Two years later, the California state superintendent of public instruction and the state school board president summarized a more typical opinion on homework: "Our children are competing in a global economy. The extra hours spent after school in Europe and Asia are giving those children an extra boost into the 21st century. We should not do less in California."

According to the Los Angeles Times, at the time, the Half Moon Bay proposal was overlooked both locally and nationally. However, now that anxiety and depression rates among adolescents have increased over the past few decades, concern that homework is negatively affecting students is increasing, making us wonder whether that Half Moon Bay school board member was not so far off after all.

"We're given so much homework for outside of school that you're staying up late and you're not focusing during the day, which makes the homework harder," sophomore Josh Alexander said. "Kind of like a chain reaction of taking longer and staying up later."

Homework. It is the universal problem that every high school student faces daily. It is the annoyance that keeps us up all night, and it is the issue that has everyone asking, is it really necessary?

German teacher Johanna Dus-Bacic believes that as necessary as it may be, there's more to high school than homework.

"There's a lot of education in time management, and socializing and involving yourself in your sports. And we don't want you to go home and just do the academic end of things," said Dus-Bacic. "There's other things that are important in your larger scope of education."

The U.S. is competitive. We're obsessed with being the best, in every aspect of the word, and we want to be number one. So imagine our country's horror when the students of the past few generations did not excel on international standardized tests the way students from other countries did. Our nation's constant need to be the best has finally caught up to us.

As much as we hate the heavy homework burden, we can't blame our teachers entirely.

"I would hope that we [teachers] all are aware. But I do know that some teachers don't have the luxury of doing that and they just have to assign things to the students that they simply don't have time to cover in the class period," said Dus-Bacic. "A large part of education is not just doing school work."

Now that we're more than a decade into the 21st century, it's apparent that the amount of homework assigned to students, at any age, is reaching an all-time high. The Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan reported that by the 2002-2003 school year, students ages 6 to 17 were doing twice as much homework as in 1981-1982.

Why the sudden increase in homework? Here's a hint: it's for the same reason we are forced to take gross amounts of standardized tests. The U.S. is competitive. We're obsessed with being the best, in every aspect of the word, and we want to be number one. So imagine our country's horror when the students of the past few generations did not excel on international standardized tests the way students from other countries did. Our nation's constant need to be the best has finally caught up to us.

According to a study conducted by the NYU Medical Center, severe, disabling depression affected approximately 17 percent of adolescents and young adults nationally in 2005, while anxiety affected approximately 13 percent of children and adolescents in 1996.

As time goes on, we can see these rates increasing. According to The National Center for Children In Poverty, in 2009, 20-30 percent of adolescents had one major depressive episode before they reached adulthood, and between 50 percent and 75 percent of adolescents diagnosed with anxiety disorders and impulse control disorders developed them as teenagers, when homework loads increase significantly.

Sophomore Margi Weiss said overburdening students with homework is counterproductive.

"I think that the American schooling system is focusing too much on competitiveness, because we think the more work they give students the faster they'll improve," she said, "when in reality, it just swamps students and it makes them more stressed.

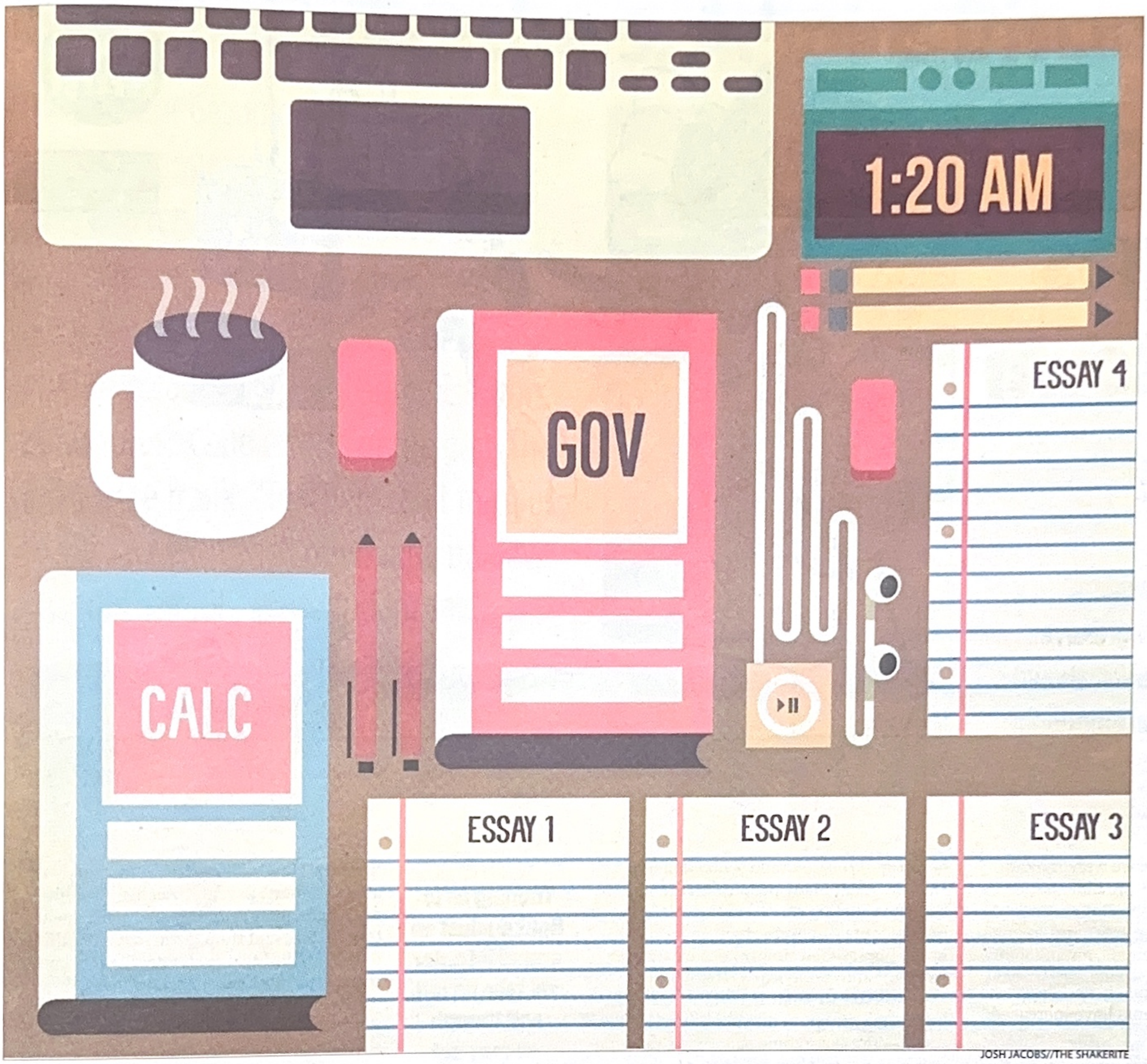
"It's getting to the point where American students focus more on getting the good grade than getting the knowledge from it."

In fact, maybe because of the heavy homework loads, students have grown accustomed to copying and cutting corners to reduce the amount of time they spend on it. Or, they have resorted to ignoring homework altogether. After all, iPhones were practically tailored for taking pictures of your finished homework and sending it to your friends. It's that easy.

A Brookings Institute Brown Center on Education Policy studied the amount of time students today spend on their homework and concluded ironically.

It's true that exceptionally conscientious and high-achieving children spend several hours a night on homework. It's also true that some teachers assign large amounts of homework and that some children are regularly overburdened. "But these are exceptions, not the rule," the study concluded. "The typical student, even in high school, spends one hour or less per day on homework."

If so, why do Shaker students struggle to balance their homework loads with their lives? In the next year, we aim to find out.



JOSH JACOBS//THE SHAKERITE

Next Year's Homework Is Studying Your Homework

Homework is an ever-growing problem that every high school student must deal with on a daily basis.

Over the next year, the Shakerite will uncover the roots of the homework issue. Not only will we investigate homework itself, but we will also examine the problems that accompany homework, such as sleep deprivation and stress.

We will study how effective homework can really be for students -- and teachers. Additionally, we'll assess students' workloads, and try to figure out how much is too much.

But for this to work, we need your help. If you are interested in participating in this study, contact us at shakeriteserver@gmail.com for fun ways to get involved. You can partake in activities such as interviews, homework logs, surveys and much more.

"Students focus more on getting the good grade than getting the knowledge."

MARGI WEISS

We want to know how busy you are in your everyday life, how you feel about your own personal homework load and how your homework load affects the rest of your activities. Anyone can get involved in the Shakerite, all you have to do is take part in this study. So let's make a change!

Look for this logo in print and on the web for stories in this series. This article is just a preview of what's to come, so stay tuned.

By the Numbers

17 percent
of adolescents and young adults are affected by severe depression

13 percent
of children and adolescents are affected by anxiety

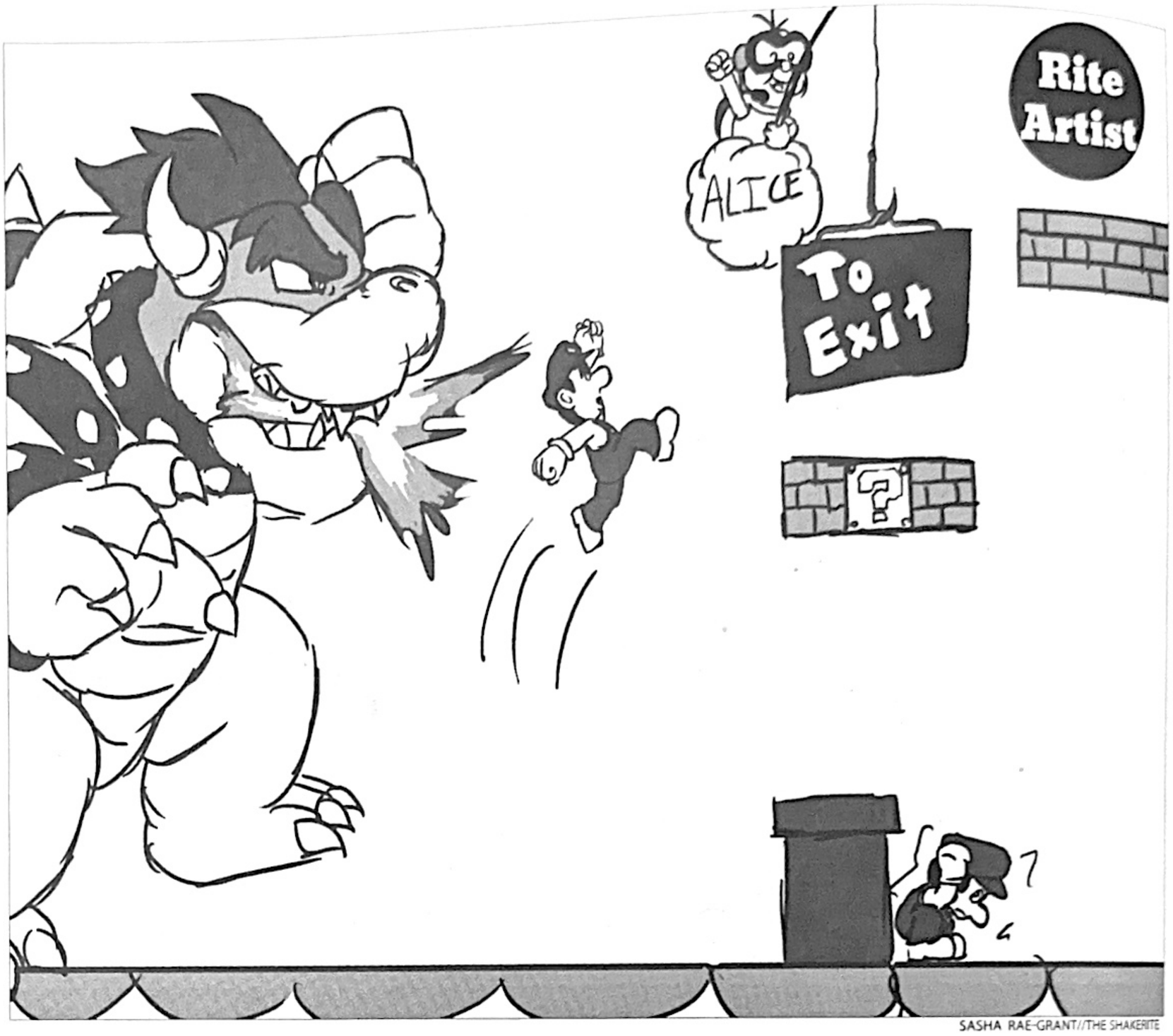
20-30 percent
of adolescents had one major depressive episode before they reached adulthood

50-75 percent
of adolescents diagnosed with anxiety disorders and impulse control disorders developed them as teenagers, when homework load increases

Follow us on Twitter: @TheShakerite and @RZ_Shakerite

ALICE Training Changes Lockdown Game

As the district considers adopting a more agressive policy for intruders, it should keep the powerful emotional impact in mind



SASHA RAE-GRANT//THE SHAKERITE

From a young age, we were taught to duck and cover, to hide in the presence of danger. But as school shootings become more and more frequent, Shaker Heights, among many other school districts, have begun to question the adequacy our district's of lockdown drills.

Rite Idea

This is where the ALICE Training Program, founded in 2001, comes into play.

ALICE (Alert Lockdown Inform Counter Evacuate) trains students to evacuate the school building when under attack rather than locking themselves in classrooms and hiding. ALICE training also teaches students and adults how to distract or even disable a shooter.

So far, Shaker has met with local ALICE personnel and has sent two employees to preliminary training. The district will soon decide whether to adopt the ALICE approach.

Law enforcement officer Greg Crane, whose wife is a school principal, was concerned for his wife's safety. He engineered the ALICE Program to ensure more active protection.

On April 20, 1999, two Columbine High School students shot and killed 12 students and one teacher during a 49-minute act of terror at the Colorado school outside Denver. What many people don't realize is that the shooting started in the cafeteria, but students who were stuck on lockdown in the library died simply because they were not allowed to leave. There was an exit available to them, according to Nick Feyerchak, program director at of ALICE.

After the Columbine shooting, Crane and his wife collaborated to create this proactive program. They cite their mission as improving victim's chances of survival, and providing them with an alternative response that doesn't involve waiting around like sitting ducks for the authorities to capture a violent intruder. However, as reasonable and helpful as this program may be, it also has its downfalls.

In order for the endangered to evacuate the building, they must travel a risky escape route, which very well may lead them to death.

Do we really want to further endanger students and adults by evacuating them through the hallways of a school while a shooter is loose?

So which is safer: staying put and risking an encounter, or taking action and risking confrontation?

Obvious issues aside, there are other, less obvious, consequences to consider if we do choose to adopt this new method of training. How will practicing these skills affect students psychologically? Training us to fight against an armed intruder will take its toll, and though we may not admit it, the possibility of a shooting will become one of our most subconscious fears.

Training us to fight against an armed intruder will take its toll, and though we may not admit it, the possibility of a shooting will become one of subconscious fears.

It's also hard on our generation because it's yet another drastic change. Recently, there have been many new policies added to our plate. Between the SAT altercation, and the school calendar being rearranged, we begin to feel more and more like guinea pigs trapped in a cage. So imagine our confusion when the same people who once taught us to cower in our classrooms, may soon instruct us to stand and fight.

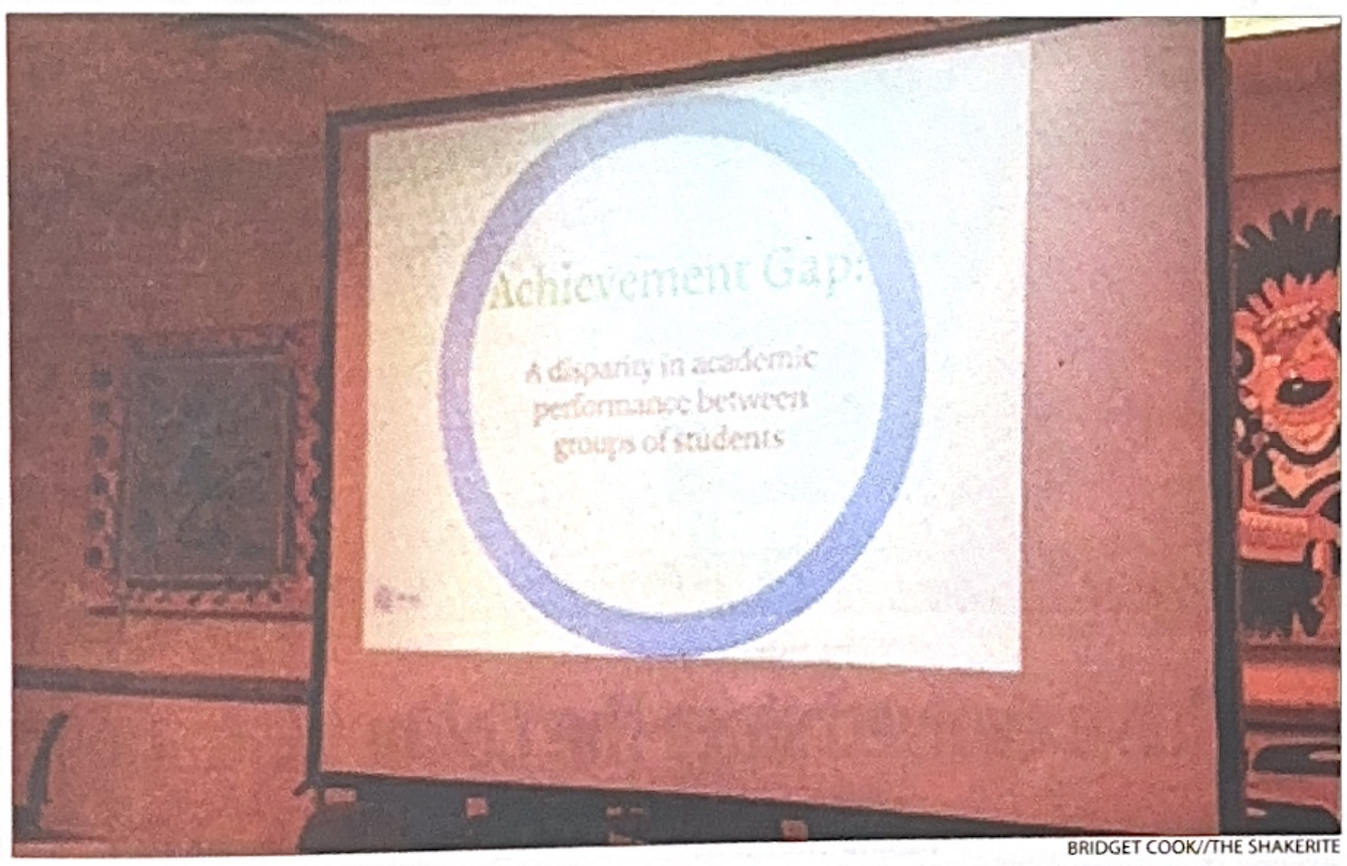
That being said, Shaker's school system is now facing the inevitable question that many high schools do as well. The one that runs through our minds when we read about yet another upsetting tragedy at a high school not too different from our own on the front page of the paper: do we adopt the ALICE program, or carry on as we are?

The truth is, we could debate it until the end of time. Go back and forth constantly, comparing the pros and cons of each. But at the end of the day, it's all a matter of preference. Instinct, even. Because they say that we're all wired for one of two things: fight or flight. The question is, which are you?

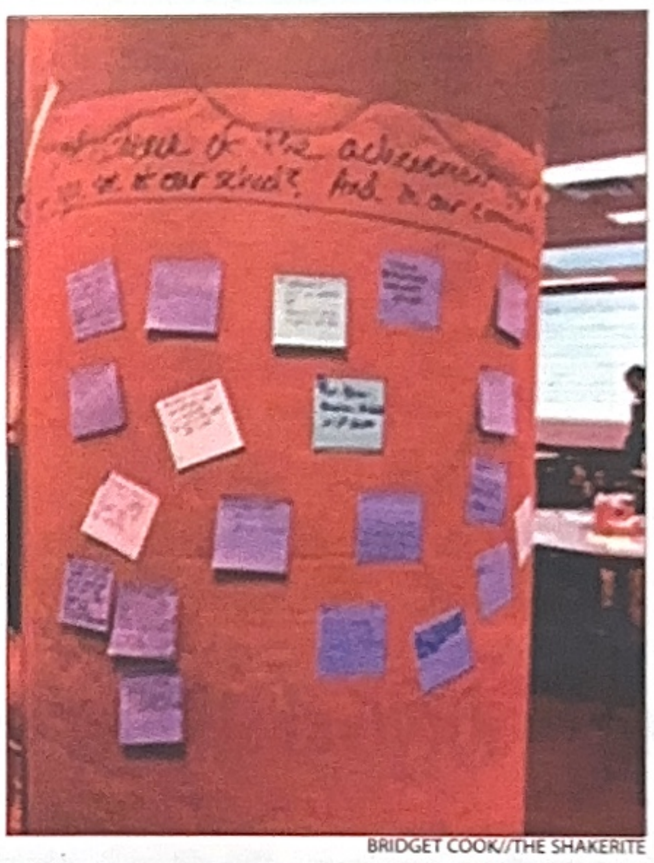
Students, Teachers, Admins Discuss Gap

The Student Group on Race Relations held a meeting April 14 in the Upper Cafeteria regarding the achievement gap. Students facilitated conversations between fellow students, teachers, guidance counselors and administrators about causes and effects of the gap. The talks were frank. "Teachers can't force us to interact with each other and, frankly, it's not their job," one student said.

BRIDGET COOK//THE SHAKERITE



BRIDGET COOK//THE SHAKERITE



BRIDGET COOK//THE SHAKERITE

Students and teachers sat at numbered tables, and all involved were randomly assigned a number when they entered the Upper Cafeteria, leading to a diverse mix of participants at each table. **SGORR leaders took** turns making a presentation regarding the gap using a large screen. **When the meeting** concluded, teachers and students were asked to answer questions on Post-It Notes and stick them to posters around the room.

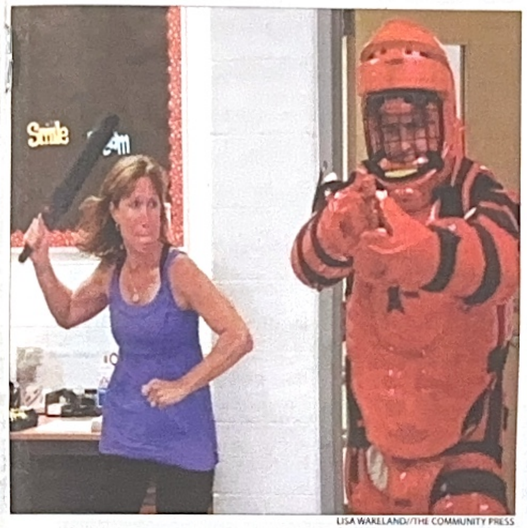
SHTA
Shaker Heights Teachers' Association
Professionals Dedicated to Excellence

GIMME JAVA COFFEE
3427 Lee Rd, Shaker Heights, OH 44120
7:00 am – 9:00 pm

In Lockdown Alternative, Students Don't Hide

In a training exercise, some high school students practice overwhelming an intruder while others evacuate the scene. As school shootings have continued, schools and law enforcement agencies have begun to adopt and rehearse more aggressive responses than the lockdowns legislated throughout the country in the years following the assault at Columbine High School 15 years ago.

NEWS.NEWSNETS.COM



LISA WAKELAND//THE COMMUNITY PRESS

A kindergarten teacher at Mariemont Elementary School near Cincinnati prepares to attack a police officer posing as an armed intruder during an ALICE training exercise. **Students at Richland** Junior High in Essex, Missouri, barricade a classroom door during ALICE training. Students were taught how to react to the threat of an armed intruder in their school. Shaker is exploring ALICE training as an alternative to lockdowns and, according to Superintendent Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., will have some kind of enhanced training program in place by next school year.

NOREEN HYSLOP//THE DAILY STATESMAN

Shaker ponders survival strategies that have evolved since the Columbine shootings

A lot has changed since Columbine.

"Why is it OK for [students] to leave when the shooting is over, but not before, when they could get out of the way of danger?"

That's the question Nick Feyerchak, program manager at The ALICE Training Institute, asks. The ALICE program, which Shaker Heights is considering adopting, is an alternative approach to the district's current lockdown procedure. ALICE is an acronym for the terms alert, lockdown, inform, counter and evacuate.

Founded in 2001 by law enforcement officer Greg Crane, ALICE trains students to evacuate the school building instead of locking themselves in classrooms and hiding.

"Learning to save your own life is imperative," the organization declares on its website.

Last spring, in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting that killed 20 students and six adults in Newtown, Conn., the district critical events committee convened to talk about the possibility of adopting ALICE training. The district also updated its critical events policies and replaced Critical Events Ready Reference manuals that have hung on clipboards in classrooms throughout the district since 2002.

"We're revamping lots of things," said high school Principal Michael Griffith. "It's easy to get lulled into everything being status quo, but it's time to fix some things and ask questions."

While the updated manual includes instructions for a shooting situation, they do not resemble the ALICE imperative. They state that "if shots have been fired in your room," teachers should "not try to be a hero" and instead "await police rescue." Additionally, "Do not approach the shooter or attempt to confiscate weapon." In the case of shots fired elsewhere in the building, the policy states, "Instruct your class to go into Safety Alert mode," which the 2002 manual depicts as a lockdown response.

BEHIND THE STORY

This investigation began with questions about the use of SHPD dogs at the high school's lockdown drill Nov 13, 2013 and evolved into an examination of lockdown alternatives. Journalism students Audie Lorenzo, Anabel McGuan, Sara Mesiano, Nora Spadoni and Ned Weingart researched, reported and wrote these stories, conducting their first interview Dec. 13, 2013 and their last April 16. Campus and City Editor Abby White edited the package.

In recent years, however, law enforcement agencies have endorsed more active responses to these incidents, and schools locally and nationally have adopted them.

Locally, Chagrin Falls, Medina, Orange and Kenston schools have all implemented ALICE training, as well as the University of Akron and Kent State University. The training has been endorsed by experts throughout the country, including Ohio Attorney General Mark DeWine.

Shaker Heights Police Chief Scott Lee said that intruder procedures have "dramatically evolved." over time. "It's something we've had to really concentrate on and deal with."

Representatives from the ALICE Training Institute met with Superintendent Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr. Nov. 25 to introduce the program. In January, Shaker's Registrar, Ouimet Smith, and Security Director Mike Gale attended ALICE training.

ALICE certification is a two-day course. The first day of training occurs in a classroom setting, where trainees go over a history of active shooter events. The second day offers scenario training.

The Shaker Heights Police Department also sent representatives to the training. "We sent some people to the training and [the district] sent some people to the training so that we could begin the process of implementing procedures and policies," said Shaker Heights Police Chief Scott Lee. "In the event of a critical incident, we will all be on the same page and will be able to respond accordingly."

Lee, who has worked in law enforcement for 33 years, explained that the police department and the school administration "meet on a regular basis to discuss issues that are common between the city and the school."

Lee specified that the responsibility to decide upon safety procedures falls on the schools. "Our job is to work with the schools once they make that decision," Lee said, "to make sure that it's successful."

"It's still very much in the investigation stage," District Communications Director Peggy Caldwell said. However, "Mr. Smith and Mr. Gale thought it was worth continued exploration after they went through training."

"The training went very well," said Hutchings. "I received positive feedback from Ouimet as well as from Mike Gale . . . We got to see that it really wasn't everything that people think that it is." Hutchings said some members of the public believe ALICE has "students trying to attack an intruder and that type of thing."

"Why is it OK for [students] to leave when the shooting is over, but not before, when they could get out of the way of danger?"
NICK FEYERCHAK

"There are people who think we train kids to shoot a gunman," said ALICE Program Director Brett Joyce. "That's not true."

At training, ALICE officials "debunk myths" about ALICE, said Joyce, such as the misconception that ALICE trainees attempt to attack intruders.

"It takes years and years to become good at fighting," Joyce said. "Boxers and wrestlers train their whole lives."

Rather, ALICE teaches "proactive survival strategies," Joyce said. Trainees learn how to evacuate a school building, barricade doors or overwhelm and distract a gunman.

"We teach them how to overload the shooter's mind," Joyce said. "A shooter is normally a child who is inexperienced with guns."

The district plans to work with the police department and the ALICE Institute to hold a training session in Shaker during the summer to "gain the perspectives of teachers, administrators and others on the program," according to Caldwell. "It is another step in assessing whether ALICE is right for Shaker."

"This is totally different, and so we want to understand it," Griffith said.

Police Chief Lee said that every school is different and school environment is different. "One program isn't going to be best for all schools," Lee said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

ALICE Training Both Schools and Scares

Anabel McGuan
Staff Reporter

I was ALICE trained.

Before I came to Shaker, I attended St. Paschal Baylon in Highland Heights. It was a small private school, with about 500 students from preschool to eighth grade.

It was your typical grade school, really. Student artwork covered the walls, inspirational cat posters hung in classrooms and students ate barely edible school lunches in the cafeteria every day.

Then one day last year, something unusual happened. The principal announced an assembly, but split us up by grade level and sent us to different locations. As my class followed our teacher down the hall, we wondered what was going on.

When police officers greeted us in the room, we knew this assembly would be different. Once everyone was in their seats, one of the officers began narrating a slideshow. He started talking about ALICE and explained to us what "alert, lockdown, inform, counter and evacuate" would mean in our school.

After the slideshow ended, one of the officers pulled out a bag full of textbooks, wooden blocks, cardboard boxes and a Nerf gun. Everyone in the room seemed confused as the officer distributed the items to students. Once his bag was empty, the police officer handed the Nerf gun to another officer, who then left the room. The first officer instructed us to throw whatever we were holding at the officer with the Nerf gun, who would represent a violent intruder, as soon as he entered the room. Our goal was to distract him enough to keep him from shooting.

The officer with the Nerf gun burst into the room, and we launched books, blocks and boxes toward him. After only a few seconds, nobody had anything left to throw. The first officer told us we had been successful; the officer with the Nerf gun had only shot a few times. We continued to repeat the excercise. Then we learned how to barricade a door using a table and a belt.

One of the police officers even taught us the proper way to break a window -- hit the corners, not the center -- so we could flee the building.

Finally, we were all asked to return to our seats. We were all a bit shaken. As the officer went through the slideshow once more, I remember seeing the police station's phone numbers, and one of the officers encouraged us to save the numbers in our cell phones. My friends and I immediately pulled out our phones and typed in the numbers.

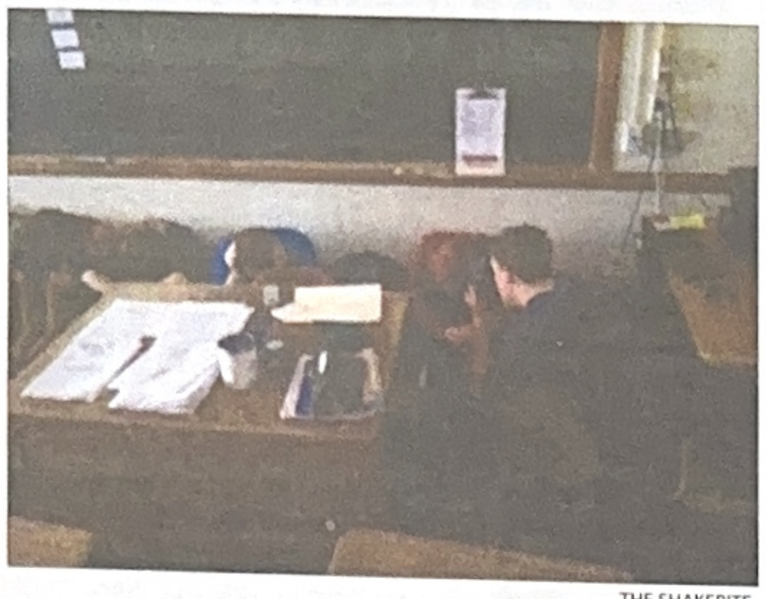
The training we had just received had convinced us we were going to need them.

A few weeks later, the principal announced that we would practice evacuating the building as if we were running from a violent intruder. Depending on what section of the building he called out, we should either barricade our doors, lock down and practice grabbing heavy objects to throw at the intruder, or quickly and quietly get out.

While my class practiced, I saw some of the younger children treating the drill as a game, pretending they were spies or ninjas.

I can't say whether ALICE is a good idea for Shaker, but I'm definitely not looking forward to going through training again.

Instinct, Habit, Uncertainty Characterize Students' Early Views



THE SHAKERITE

To create the cover image for this issue, Photo Editor Will McKnight photographed students who volunteered to act as if they were following lockdown procedure after school April 15 in Room 224.

NORA SPADONI STAFF REPORTER
REPORTING CONTRIBUTED BY SARA MESIANO

Superintendent Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr. said the district will not train students in the near future.

Nevertheless, some students have strong opinions concerning ALICE.

"That," said junior Gianni Ciccarelli, "is a terrible idea."

Ciccarelli believes there is a risk that students and teachers are "going to get shot," he said. "It seems more dangerous."

Such reactions are not surprising. High school students have been taught to hide from an intruder for years. Today's freshmen have practiced lockdowns since first grade.

However, senior Deborah Taylor noted downsides of a lockdown-only policy. "Sometimes, it's not safe because lots of rooms have lots of windows," she said. "Hiding against a wall won't help."

Some students and teachers already advocate attempting to escape school in a shooter situation. "I've had teachers who said that if there's an actual lockdown, we should run out of a window," said sophomore Naomi Gaston.

Junior Madeline Hertz, however, supports the idea of ALICE training, specifically the technique in which students and teachers override and overwhelm an intruder. She said that if students "crowd into the hallways and start heading towards exits, then it would create a much more chaotic environment that the attacker would not be expecting or prepared for."

Junior Isabel Rothman questioned the idea of teachers attacking a shooter. "I think some teachers could have the ability [to stop a shooter], but there are others who can't," she said.

"I don't necessarily agree with ALICE method," Gaston said, "but sitting in a room doesn't seem that great either."

READ MORE student responses at shakerite.com

"One program isn't going to be best for all schools," Lee said.

Hutchings said that undergoing training will teach "adults that there are options that you may have if there was ever a situation where you have an intruder in the school building."

"If . . . you have a way of getting out," Hutchings said, "you take advantage of that moment . . . not just hide and sit and wait for the police."

English teacher Halle Bauer said ALICE training could "definitely be a burden on teachers."

"Ideally in that situation you would act like a hero," she said, "but most teachers didn't become teachers to save lives. If they wanted to save lives, they could have been firefighters or police officers . . . I think putting that kind of responsibility on teachers isn't a great idea."

Although teachers may have more options with ALICE training, "they wouldn't want to make any rash decisions because there's so many different things that could be going on," Bauer said.

Feyerchak cited the 1999 Columbine High School shooting, in which 13 people were killed, as the major reason for the ALICE program's creation. "Fifteen years ago, Columbine was lockdown only," he said. "The shooting actually started in the cafeteria. Students in the library there actually had the exit available to them for use. The protocol was for them to lockdown only.

"So, they had an exit available to them, and they could have been out of that library away from the danger, but the mandate was that they stay in the building and hide and wait for law enforcement to arrive," Feyerchak said. Ten of the 13 people killed at Columbine were inside the library.

Since 1999, school shootings have continued to occur across the country. In February 2012, three students were shot and killed at Chardon High School, 18 miles from Shaker Heights.

"After each incident of violence in other schools," Board of Education member Annette Sutherland said, "board members request that our administrators study those other situations and consult with law enforcement to determine whether Shaker's security equipment, procedures and training need to be updated with learning from those tragic examples."

Griffith, too, expressed a willingness to consider other options. "We want to hear what else is being talked about as an approach that makes you more safe," he said. "All of those [other school shootings] influence us. As things happen in a community or outside anywhere in the country, that influences you."

Feyerchak portrayed the process of responding to an active school shooter situation as time consuming. First, someone must dial 911 to alert the police. The call goes to a dispatcher, who must connect to police officers. The officers then must reach the school, which can take as long as eight to 12 minutes. While the high school is only .5 miles from the police station on Lee Road, Mercer Elementary School is 3.3 miles from the station, an estimated eight-minute drive.

By the time a shooter is located in the school, said Feyerchak, 15 to 17 minutes have typically passed. The average shooting situation lasts between five and six minutes.

"Lockdown-only is a potentially fatal strategy," Feyerchak said. "ALICE is more proactive than sitting and hiding under a desk waiting for someone to save you."

Shaker Heights High School psychologist Sagar Patel sees the pros and cons of active-shooter training and believes it would be best for some situations.

Patel said despite the emotional toll it could take on children, ALICE training may be worth the risk. "It helps people not to freeze and prepares educators," he said. "You can never have too much training."

However, Patel said the problem with such training is the amount of students who would evacuate the school at once. That many students would crowd the halls, which may put students at risk.

Junior Madeline Hertz believes a large number of students in the hallway would overwhelm the shooter, one technique ALICE teaches. "The chaos of [students] running out of the classroom could be beneficial," she said. However, she said it could also pose "more of a risk."

"If . . . you have a way of getting out, you take advantage of that moment . . . not just hide and sit and wait for the police."

GREGORY C. HUTCHINGS, JR.

Despite possible dangers that could arise in ALICE-trained schools, more than 300 school districts are now certified in ALICE training in Ohio alone. Although the program is based in Ohio, it is practiced nationwide. Six hundred school districts and 60 million people have been ALICE-trained nationally, Feyerchak said.

According to Feyerchak, schools as large as 1,800 students have been trained by ALICE.

In the end, Bauer said, "The administration has done its research, and I fully trust them to implement a plan that protects students and teachers."

Sutherland said she does not yet have an opinion on ALICE, except that she wants "our security personnel to study the program and make a decision about whether to pursue it. . . . There is always a chance of a change based on new awareness and new tools."

"This is a starting point for you guys," Feyerchak said. "You guys are taking the next step in moving forward."

Hutchings said that the district will have "a plan and situation in place before the school year next year." The decision to adopt ALICE is "not something we're going to prolong," he said.

However, "Whatever the practice we adopt, it will still be customized to meet the needs of Shaker," Hutchings said. "I don't believe in purchasing practices off of a shelf."

"No doubt, we should explore everything and anything that would give us the best possible situation to keep everyone safe," Griffith said. "If [ALICE is] the best approach that would accomplish that, then that's what we would like to do."

"Our goal is simple," he said. "We want to be safe. We want to make sure students feel comfortable and know that we have the safest school environment that we could have."

In Training Drills, Schools Stage Shootings — Fake Blood Included

JIM SEIDA/NBC NEWS

Students in a Troy, Missouri school participate in an active shooter drill during February. In this drill, theater students performed the roles of injured, killed or fleeing students as police shoot blanks at them.

In active shooter drills, theater students act as shooters, victims

NED WEINGART STAFF REPORTER
REPORTING CONTRIBUTED BY AUDIE LORENZO

Some schools have gone far beyond lockdowns to prepare for an event they hope will never happen.

With the introduction of agencies such as The ALICE Training Institute, which train schools to react proactively in shooter situations, schools around the country have begun staging extreme shooter drills to prepare students, teachers and staff members to fend off armed intruders. These drills use guns that shoot blanks, fake blood and even actors to simulate a school shooting.

According to NBC News, a school in Troy, Missouri staged an extreme shooter drill in February. Sixty-nine students participated in the event, which included police officers shooting at them with blanks. The students wore makeup that simulated blood resulting from gunshot wounds. Most students had some background in acting and were members of the school's theater department.

As of August 2013, Missouri state law requires such drills, and they are increasingly common in schools throughout the country.

Shaker Theater Department Chairman Scott Sumerak, who participated in such simulations at another school, believes the drills' psychological effects should not be underestimated.

"Even in an imaginary situation, the experience can have an impact on those involved."

SCOTT SUMERAK

"I can tell you that even in an imaginary situation, the experience can have an impact on those involved," he said. "You can say to yourself, 'I am here to play a part,' but once things start, it can be unsettling."

Sumerak believes the drills will only be effective if schools plan them thoroughly.

"If rushed into without careful consideration, simply to show how forward-thinking an organization is, I think the damage would far outweigh the benefits," he said.

According to the Morning Journal, a Lorain newspaper, schools in Lorain County practice active shooter drills coordinated through ALICE. During the drills, students are told to the confront the intruder by throwing chairs and tackling him.

The complicated aspect of these drills is determining their overall goal and what role students should play during them.

"If the goal is to prepare the people in charge to react and respond efficiently, that's one thing. But if the goal is to mentally prepare students to respond calmly in a crisis situation, that's something completely different," Sumerak said.

"With the right approach, these drills could be very helpful for both the first responders and those receiving the training" he said.

Lorain County and Troy both involved students in their drills. Were Shaker to stage one, Sumerak believes that his theater students would be willing to participate.

"The students in our classes would be very open to participating," Sumerak said. "We would support and facilitate this involvement as long as there was a clear training program and an opportunity to formally process the experience afterwards."

Senior theater student Lucy Richman agreed. "I think if the students are OK with participating in it and they know what they're getting themselves into, then that's totally fine," she said.

Richman said she would participate in an active shooter drill if asked, and that the drill would test her acting abilities.

"I mean, it's something that's really relevant and goes beyond just acting on stage in front of an audience," she said. "There's something at stake beyond just entertainment, so it's a lot more challenging."

NBC News reporter Nona Aronowitz covered the active shooter drill in Troy.

"It was pretty harrowing to see students pretend to be shot," Aronowitz said in an email interview. "One girl started crying uncontrollably and had to be calmed down by a teacher and a friend, but most kids were fine and didn't react this way."

Aronowitz said the most unusual part of the experience was the preparation that occurred before the drill.

"It was weird seeing kids putting on stage makeup and moulage and laughing about how they were so excited to get shot," she said. "It was jarring to see kids acting so casual about such an intense experience."

LET'S BOUNCE

HANNAH HEVERLING
ENTERPRISE REPORTER

Ideastream's Lauren Wilson jumps on the main trampoline surface during a sky fit class at Sky Zone Indoor Trampoline Park in Westlake.

SARAH JANE TRIBBLE//IDEASTREAM

Backflips off the walls, dodgeball, space-jam slam dunks, foam pits, pizza-- what more could I ask for? To me, that's an ideal Friday night.

Imagine a bouncy house just like the ones you used to jump in as a child, but for all ages. We all remember jumping on and in an inflatable castle for hours when we were younger.

Sky Zone Indoor Trampoline Park is the all-ages version. It's a trampoline-walled playing court. A sea of trampolines, all connected to form one massive bouncing surface resembling a bowl or half-pipe shape.

The jumping areas are separated into individual squares so that nobody can be "double-bounced," or launched into the air when two people on the same trampoline jump high but slightly out of sync.

Because of the plentiful trampolines that appear infinite, Sky Zone is a gymnast's paradise. But Sky Zone policies warn people to "flip at your own risk," because, although some kids have natural flipping abilities, some don't. Especially me. When my friends and I made the journey to the Westlake Sky Zone location, I knew I would stick to what I know best: a front flip. Having grown up exercising this stunt in bouncey houses, I am confident that the front flip is my greatest aerial talent.

However, I don't have those natural stunt-devil flipping abilities that gymnasts do. When my friends and I first hit the trampoline surface, we only saw children aged 7-17 bouncing up and down. It all seemed so inviting.

Beaumont junior Dawn Fann remembers her first impressions of Sky Zone very well. "I thought it was awesome. It was honestly so much fun. It brought out my inner child!" Fann said. In the midst of all the Sky Zone fun, safety precautions must be well considered. You know what they say: everything that shines ain't always gold, and even Sky

MUD GODDESS PHOTOGRAPHY

KYLIE HULVER//SKYZONE

Three young adults take full advantage of the trampoline walls at Sky Zone in Westlake. **The foam pit** and basketball hoops are side by side, along with tables and chairs to dine in the main floor area.

"I thought it was awesome. It was honestly so much fun. It brought out my inner child!"

DAWN FANN

Zone has its downfalls. Indoor trampoline parks have a high injury rate. An American Academy of Pediatrics report found that in 2009 alone, there were 70 injuries for every 100,000 kids ages 0-14 bouncing on a trampoline. There were 160 injuries per 100,000 kids 5-14 years old -- a whopping total of about 98,000 trampoline injuries each year. Emergency department physicians say trampolines and sleds account for the most ED visits by children.

Since 2009, indoor trampoline parks have upgraded all of their equipment,which may have decreased the injury rate. Despite the risk of severe injuries, trampoline parks are still a source of entertainment--rain or shine.

Kylie Hulver, Sky Zone event host, is well aware of the possible injuries, but she believes the injury rate has slowly decreased over time due to newly enforced precautions. Hulver's Sky Zone employees walk around the individual trampoline squares, closely monitoring everyone jumping. In the past, these safety precautions weren't as strongly enforced.

"Sometimes on the weekends, the ambulance comes, but it hasn't been nearly as frequent because we have been managing our risks well and keeping kids under control," Hulver said.

She still enjoys her job, however. "It's really cool because everyone on the Sky Zone 'team' gets along and works as a fluid unit."

The exhilaration of endlessly jumping on a trampoline surface expires when someone suffers an injury. Junior Hal Tafe experienced this firsthand when he tweaked his knee while attempting a few stunts.

"I flipped and I didn't time it right and landed funny," he said. " It hurt at the time but it's much better now."

Experiencing Sky Zone isn't all about avoiding injuries. It can also bring out your inner NBA star by enabling you to dunk a basketball. It's not every day that you get to slam dunk. My confidence soared as the air beneath me expanded while I sprung upward to the basket. After dunking like pros, we went on to play another common high school game that's available at Sky Zone: dodgeball. Personally, it made me feel as if I were in the Matrix, dodging bullets, except those bullets just happened to be soft dodgeballs.

But, if attempting gymnastics is your thing, Sky Zone offers a foampit similar to those seen in gymnastics facilities. Kids are directed to stand in line and wait their turn behind four different lines so nobody gets hurt. Then you jump off of a long, narrow trampoline into the foam pit.

The kids are all antsy in anticipation of their turns to jump. Some people perform wacky stunts into the pit, from front flips to just flailing their arms. Landing in the foam pit is an indescribable, yet very squishy, experience to say the least.

After a sweaty trampoline experience, I still had all my limbs -- and was game enough to go again.

"Everyone at the meetings just really wants to be there."

LEA KAYALI

Project Support Unifies Students

BRIDGET COOK SPOTLIGHT EDITOR

Bathed in the glow of a mid-March afternoon, Room 133 bustled with activity. Gathering students about her, junior Lea Kayali produced a large manilla envelope, igniting everyone's interest. "Today, we're going to have a scavenger hunt," Kayali announced.

Lea Kayali

At Kayali's direction, the members of Project Support embarked on the clued search. The hunt was an immediate hit -- linking arms and hurrying down each hallway, every member was on the lookout for envelopes.

Shaker has numerous clubs and organizations in the limelight. SGORR, GSA, Latin Club and Model UN are some of the most established at the high school.

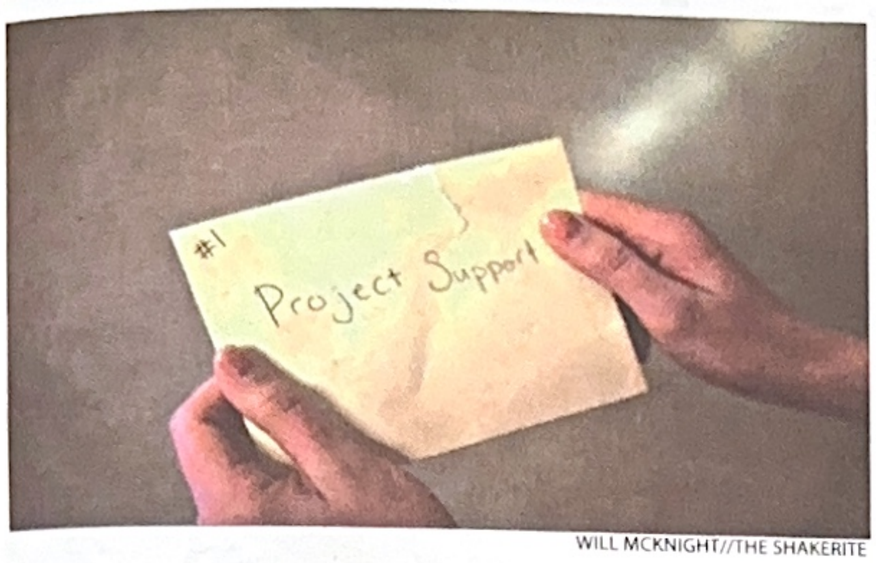
Just beneath the surface of these well-known clubs and activities lies another layer of organizations on their way to the top. Take, for instance, Project Support.

Project Support is a cooperative effort to create an environment for students with special needs to bond and spend time with the rest of the high school's population.

Supervisor Jessica Wilkes described Project Support as a social group for anyone of any ability level. "I think it's great. The social experience for my students is wonderful," Wilkes said. "They really learn best from their peers."

Wilkes enjoys the camaraderie the meetings build between students. "This has been a really good year. We've had a board game party, made pizzas, made sugar cookies, and we're looking forward to a picnic in May," Wilkes said.

Meeting once a month, the club is led by junior Lea Kayali, and has existed on and off at the



WILL MCKNIGHT//THE SHAKERITE

Freshmen Andre Pettis, Luxus Flowers and Nadia DiGeorgia walk with junior Maeve Cook through the high school halls on a Project Support scavenger hunt March 15. **A student holds** a clue before reading it out loud to the rest of the club. **Junior Natalie Martin** looks on as members read the next clue in the scavenger hunt list. Project Support meetings, occurring once a month in Room 133, are typically an hour in length and comprise activities including board games, picnics and holdiay card decorating.

WILL MCKNIGHT//THE SHAKERITE

high school for 11 years depending on student leadership. "Didi Shiloh approached me about leading Project Support last year," Kayali said. "I work with kids with similar issues outside of school, so she knew I would be interested."

WILL MCKNIGHT//THE SHAKERITE

Since inheriting the leadership position for Project Support, Kayali looks forward to her time spent at the once-monthly club. "Personally, [Project Support] puts a smile on my face," Kayali said. "Everyone at the meetings really wants to be there. The students are so lovely there, and everyone's just so happy and kind."

Kayali said the club's mission is to encourage social interaction and friendships between students of all walks of life. "I don't want to make myself out to be doing a big huge job," Kayali said. "I have a monthly commitment, but it hasn't been too much work. I bet if more people knew about this, more kids would come in."

Junior Natalie Martin has been a Project Support member since the beginning of the school year. "When Lea became the president was the first time I heard about it. But I wish I had joined sooner," Martin said.

Martin has formed meaningful connections. "For me, I have really learned to understand how caring and compassionate the kids are and how much of a role model we are for them," Martin said.

Freshman member Nadia DiGeorgia enjoys Project Support's positivity.

"I have grown to love the kids and we have a relationship that is so much more fun than any of my other friends. Even after the worst day, just stopping by brings a smile to my face," DiGeorgia said. "I mean, how couldn't it?"

Unaffected by age, ability or any other factor, the relationships forming at Project Support are exemplary. Though the the monthly meetings are brief, the message behind Project Support is a powerful one.

Embodying companionship, tolerance and kindness in its purest form, Project Support is well on its way to becoming another beloved and successful club in the Shaker community.

One Little Word

Two syllables that degrade millions

As a teenager, I'm no stranger to profanity. Our student body's colorful language floats in one ear and out the other, rarely surprising me. These decidedly un-printable oaths fade into the background as the halls overflow with students on the move.

Profanity - a regular presence, to adults' dismay, in Shaker's noisy hallways - has long ceased to shock me.

Bridget Cook
Spotlight Editor

Well, almost every word, that is. There's still one that manages to stop me in my tracks even after all these years.

"Retard."

It permeates the hallway chatter every so often, sending a jolt through me. Few words still carry the power to make me so uneasy so quickly. But it works every time.

Unlike so many of the offensive words our language has to offer, this one, when used with so much hate, so much misunderstanding , carries baggage. How did it ever become acceptable to use someone else's identity as an insult?

Psychology teacher Silvia Sheppard explained the effects of using this harsh language. "There's brain scans showing how ostracism by language impacts the same part of the brain that registers physical pain," Sheppard said. "By using a derogatory term, we create these 'in' groups and 'out' groups out of fear, and it makes people feel ostracized."

Physical pain. Ostracization. Are those feelings anyone would deliberately want his or her daily language to convey? I doubt it.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 56.7 million Americans have a disability. Within that 56.7 million are some of my own friends, relatives and some of the most inspiring and uplifting individuals I've had the privilege of meeting. And yet by using one six-letter word, people continue to disrespect an entire population.

As I'm sure you're aware, a disability, just like skin color, body build or hair color, is a set of characteristics someone is born with. It's a part of someone's identity. By using the R-word (a decidedly outdated term in 2014) in synonymy with "stupid," "loser" or any other negative term, one can demean and belittle millions of people in a mere two syllables.

That's a lot of power packed into one little word!

"Retard" was not always loaded with such connotation. Years ago, it was a clinical diagnosis used by physicians. Only in recent years has that diagnosis become twisted into a word that exudes disrespect and exclusion. Doctors have retired "retard" from their vocabulary, instead replacing it with "intellectual disability." It's time the rest of us did the same.

In her experience as a supervisor of the Gay-Straight Alliance at Cleveland Heights High, Sheppard saw progress in removing "gay" as a derogatory term. "I saw it get better, where students chimed in and said, 'Please don't say that,' and it became part of the culture," Sheppard said. "Your words can be harmful. It's something we as a school and a society need to be vigilant about."

Fortunately, this word can be disarmed. But it will take more than a slap on the wrist or a condescending "Don't say that!" Eliminating offensive use of the R-word will only occur when people realize its impact.

Think about it: next time you reach for the R-word to describe a quiz or referee's call, you're substituting another human being for an object or an adjective. It makes just about as much sense as saying, "That test was so Bridget" or "Don't be such a Bridget."

Sounds absurd, doesn't it?

Time Abroad is Time for Understanding

The power of international travel transcends words

CLARA MEDALIE SPOLIGHT EDITOR

"I'm very different now than when I left Shaker," junior Jeremy Cronig said.

Cronig spent last semester abroad in Germany attending the John F. Kennedy High School in Berlin.

The opportunity to spend a semester or year overseas may only present itself a couple times throughout a school career. When a close family friend in Berlin offered Cronig the chance to spend a semester abroad with them, he quickly accepted.

Jeremy Cronig

"There was never really a thought of not going," he said.

Senior Annie Strnisha also went abroad, spending her junior year attending school in Koenigs Wusterhausen, Germany.

Annie Strnisha

Shaker currently has exchange programs between schools in Germany and France. On top of that, there are four foreign exchange students attending the high school this year, and groups of Japanese and Chilean students come to Shaker for a few weeks every couple years.

Suzanne Genillier

While a few weeks in another country can open cultural doors, an extended period of time abroad can be a life-changing experience. In addition to enhancing language skills, long stays abroad offer unique perspectives on American education by comparison.

Cronig and Strnisha each experienced drastic differences between American and German schooling. "There's a lot less testing in German schools. Testing is a really American thing," Cronig said. In Germany, high schoolers are put on a track according to their potential career interests. Instead of many tests throughout high school as there are in America, in order to get their diploma, students must take the Abitur, a big test at the end of their schooling. Although tests are less frequent, Cronig thinks it is a lot harder to get a diploma in Germany due to the difficulty of this test and the high stakes.

ANNIE STRNISHA

Strnisha travelled all around Germany and Europe throughout her year abroad. Pictured above is architecture in the German state of Rhineland-pfalz, one of the states Strnisha visited while on vacation. Travelling was one of Strnisha's favorite aspects of her stay in Germany.

"You have one chance to do it," Cronig said.

Typically, Cronig's teachers only gave quizzes and no chapter tests. "That threw me off. I was used to learning a chapter, taking a test, and we just didn't," he said. However, "I was able to really do well without testing."

Strnisha took 14 classes while in Germany for a year, unheard of at an American high school. However, each class was only once to twice a week."Its kind of nice to mix it up," Strnisha said. However, "I didn't like that the classes were so much longer," she said. Strnisha only had four classes a day, each class longer than a typical 50-minute class.

German and most European schools run on block scheduling. This means that there are fewer classes per day offering a more concentrated experience of subjects. There may be less homework with block scheduling because the same classes aren't every day. "There's a sense of independence and freedom that Europeans have," Cronig said. Americans grow up having tight school schedules that often keep them at school all day with only a 30-minute lunch break.

Although classes are longer with block scheduling, there are typically long breaks in between classes. Cronig thinks American students are not ready for the amount of independence German and most European students have. "We aren't taught how to have freedom as students," he said.

Culturally, Cronig's experience overseas made him appreciate the "Shaker bubble," the environment of cultural, economic, religious and ethnic diversity that students experience at school daily.

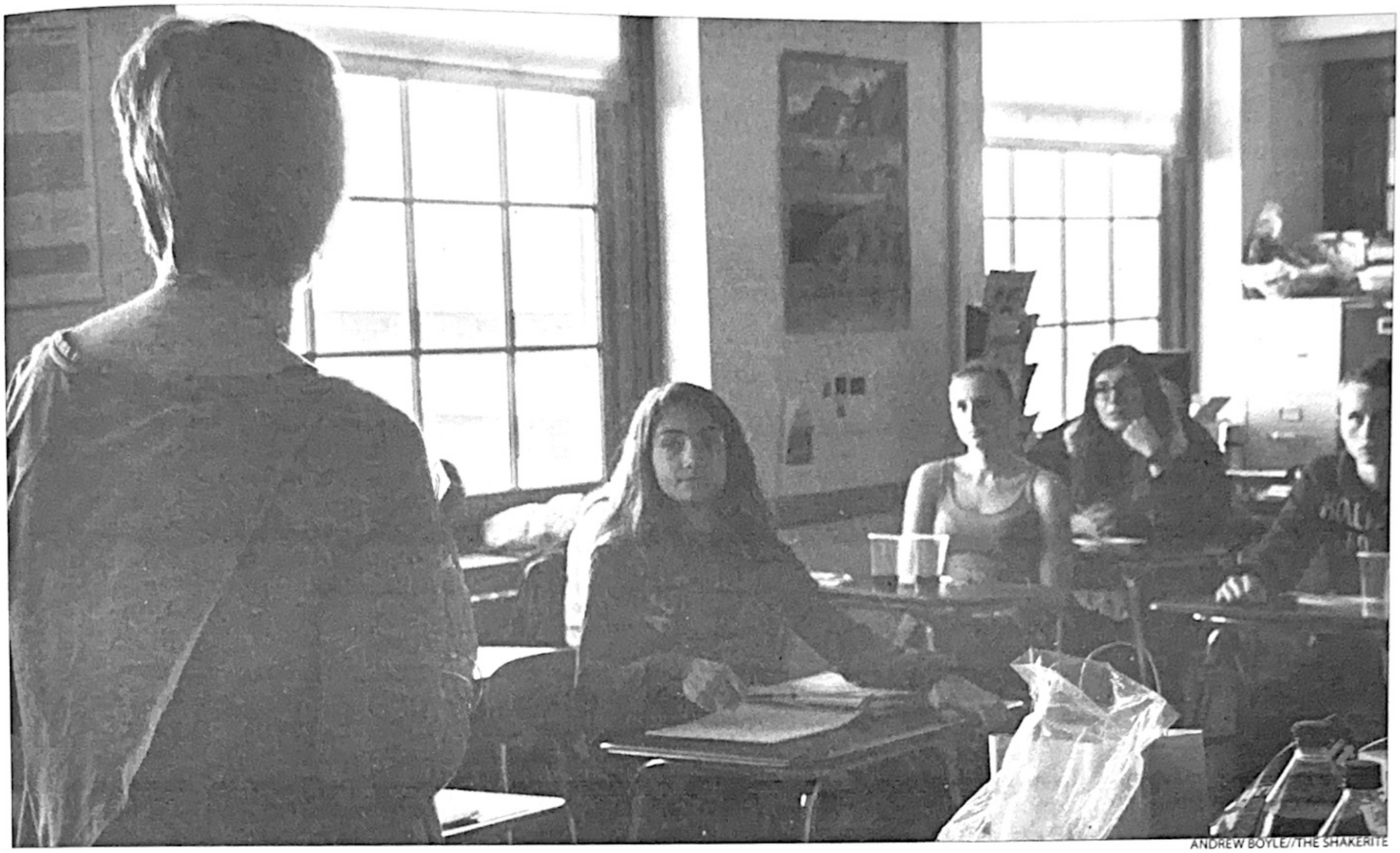
"Americans as a whole are a lot more

ANNIE STRNISHA

Strnisha and her host brother, Eyrik, pose for a photo in Berlin. Strnisha stayed with a young couple and their five-year-old. She said she and her host family got along very well.

JEREMY CRONIG

Cronig attended the John F. Kennedy high school in Berlin. Half of the school is American, which Cronig attended, and the other half is a completely separate German high school.



ANDREW BOYLE//THE SHAKERITE

A group of French high school students tried different American foods in a French language classroom April 17. French teacher Suzanne Genillier helps coordinate a student exchange between the Lycee Flaubert in Rouen, France and the high school.

politically correct," he said. Cronig noticed that people at his school were not used to diversity. He said almost everyone was the same religion and that he was one of only three Jewish students.

Shaker's diversity was "the thing I missed that affected me the most," Cronig said.

The effect of the "Shaker bubble" is a common phenomenon people notice while travelling. Strnisha also experienced the effects. Her German high school lacked diversity, as well. "It was more conservative than Shaker is," said Strnisha. She remarked how students sometimes made comments about other races that would not be considered politically correct at Shaker. While Shaker is a pocket of diversity, it can't be denied that spending an extended period of time in Europe opens endless cultural doors. Throughout Strnisha's year, she travelled to 12 different countries. Cronig travelled all around Germany and realized how drastic the cultural differences are between one region and another. Strnisha thinks that spending a year in Germany was the perfect amount of time. "It's the only opportunity to truly learn a culture," she said.

On top of experiencing the cultural and educational effects of time abroad, language proved to be another important factor. "I was really nervous at first," said Cronig, who had taken German at Shaker for two years prior to leaving. Over the course of the semester abroad, he said his German improved drastically. "I'm much more confident speaking German since I've come back, even away from class," he said.

Strnisha went to Germany through the student exchange AFS program. She stayed with a young couple and their 5-year-old child. A principal reason Strnisha decided to spend her junior year in Germany was to become fluent in German, which she succeeded in doing.

French teacher Suzanne Genillier is a native of France and understands the merits of spending time abroad. "It's definitely enriching. You question a lot more of what you do on a daily basis," she said. Genillier's two daughters each spent time abroad as well, one in Nepal and the other in Brazil. While visiting her daughter in Nepal, she was awed at "the power of language" as her daughter responded in fluent Nepalese to a shocked Nepalese citizen.

Genillier thinks that spending time abroad is enriching. "You definitely have a much more open-minded view of things," she said.

Currently, Genillier is building a long-term program between Shaker and a school in Rouen, France. "We now have the opportunity to send a student for a semester," she said. Genillier hopes to change the mentality of students who don't ever consider spending time abroad.

Cronig and Strnisha can attest to the merits of studying abroad. Both immensely improved their language skills while learning a foreign culture. "All in all," Strnisha said, "I think it's a really great experience."

"There's a sense of independence and freedom that Europeans have."

JEREMY CRONIG

Persistance Pays in Parisian Streets

Abby White
Campus and City Editor

"You lived in France? You must've loved it!"

I've heard that declaration more times than I can count. I'd like to set the record straight. I spent eighth grade in Paris, where my dad, a professor, took a yearlong sabbatical. In July 2010, my family arrived in a country where none of us spoke the language. My dad knew some French, but his accent usually dashed hopes of comprehensibility. We lived in a 60-square-meter apartment, and I attended a private French school with classmates I generally couldn't understand due to language or socioeconomic barriers. (I had no designer clothing. The horror!) So, no, I did not love living in France. It's hard to appreciate what a city, even Paris, has to offer when you're a fish out of water. It's difficult to have fun if you can only speak to your parents, or a group of just nine classmates enduring the same harrowing experience as you.

For months, I struggled through all-French coursework and middle school social dynamics. However, by April, I understood jabbering passersby on the street. I bought produce at the market without blushing my embarrassment. I could speak French. With that new capability, I spent my last three months in Paris appreciating the city. I took exploratory metro rides with my friends; I grabbed pastries from the five bakeries one block from my apartment. Those months may have comprised the best time of my life. Living abroad is difficult, and frankly, without the language skills, good luck. But if you can overcome that trial, you'll undergo one of the most worthwhile experiences anyone can undertake. Au moins, I did.

Students aren't employees — though they are the proxy universities use to generate billions.

WILL MCKNIGHT//THE SHAKERITE

Juniors Adin Leibovitch, David Carter and sophomore Christian Lassiter stand on the sideline at the Oct. 4 Shaker vs. Mentor football game. Unionionizing is "a good start," Leibovitch said. "It's OK to let the players have more say, they just don't know what's best yet."

College Football's Brawn Defends Rights

Instead of practicing for 50 hours a week, with new union ruling, players could have rightful benefits and a say in their work hours

Marcia Brown
Managing Editor

Northwestern University, one of the premier universities in the country, nurtures journalistic excellence and boasts a low admittance rate. And it still offers Division I athletics.

For these reasons, Northwestern argues that it's the wrong university for an experiment that could redefine major college athletics — unionization of its football players. Because, of course, NU fosters strong academics. And, of course, it encourages young athletes to put academics first. With one of the highest graduation rates among DI universities, it's hard to argue.

That hasn't deterred the College Athletes Players Association.

Through the efforts of CAPA, the case was brought to the National Labor Relations Board. The NLRB's regional leader ruled in a 24-page opinion that the Northwestern's football players are university employers, having the right to vote to unionize.

If the team votes affirmatively, the Wildcats can form a union, or a group of employees legally recognized and empowered to bargain with their employer for wages, benefits and working conditions. In this case, CAPA is encouraging unionization to negotiate players' rights, health benefits and practice hours, but not for pay for their work.

The ruling also outlined what comprises an employer-employee relationship, citing examples of dress codes and practices of up to 50 hours during the season compared to 20 hours of class time, according to The New York Times. Northwestern argued these restrictions have no bearing on academic performance and study time. The university maintained that practices did not restrict class time, and that the coach-player relationship was not the same as the work environment. In other words, student-athletes were not primarily athletes; they were primarily students. Therefore, they shouldn't be able to unionize.

When representing its side, the university used Kain Colter's own academic achievements to bolster its case. Colter ('14) was a Wildcat quarterback and is spearheading the unionization movement.

"At Northwestern, the university cares," Chicago Tribune sports columnist and reporter Teddy Greenstein said in a phone interview. "And when Colter testified, they were able to come back and say he was all-academic when he alleged that he could have gotten kicked off the team for missing practice."

But, wait a second. How can college players unionize if they aren't employees? Well, according to the March 26 NLRB ruling, which only applies to private universities, players' scholarships are the same thing as a salary.

College athletes at the DI level have always devoted enormous energy and time to their sports, which are really their vocations. Some obtain degrees, but these achievements pale in comparison to the lucrative profits colleges reap from their labor. As cogs in a massive profit machine, players can face ultimatums: attend class, or attend to an injury, and be discarded; attend practice and maintain their scholarships.

Casimier Mitchell

Unionizing would allow players greater freedom and more protection from exploitation. Because that's just what it is. The NCAA and affiliated schools, especially at the DI level, earn $16 billion in top-level university athletics revenue each year, according to Bloomberg, a business and financial market news source. The students gain an education, but at what cost? Relative to the sacrifice of the student-athletes, the schools' costs are minimal.

"It's clear that it's asking an enormous amount of work for these highly skilled people in return for which these people

get paid, in the grand scheme of things, a pittance compared to what they bring to the university, and a lot compared to what a lot of people make," said Sandy McNair, a Cleveland labor lawyer and a member of the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections. McNair's office represents the United Steelworkers Local 979, who are assisting CAPA.

I'm not too worried that collective bargaining will impoverish DI schools. But Northwestern must be.

In a statement, the university asserted, "Northwestern believes strongly that our student-athletes are not employees, but students. Unionization and collective bargaining are not appropriate methods to address the concerns raised by student-athletes."

To rephrase: the injuries students sustain on the field don't qualify the students for compensation the way injuries employees sustain at work qualify employees for compensation. At least, according to Northwestern. Students aren't employees — though they are the proxies universities use to generate billions.

However, not all students — even at Northwestern — agree that unionization is the best solution. Ari Ross ('13), former Shakerite Raider Zone editor, is currently a Northwestern freshman and co-producer of SportsVoice, a sports talk show for Northwestern's campus radio station. "Northwestern isn't the perfect school to do this," Ross said. " [The players] don't come to Northwestern just for football; they're also coming to get a great education."

"The medical benefits are important. I just don't know if unionization is the correct route, and being a football fan, I also don't want my school to not have a football team three to four years down the road," he said.

Ross described the sentiment among the university's student body. "The general idea is that we like the idea of the team unionizing, but then it will turn into salary, and then Northwestern will go Division III, and we won't have football anymore," said Ross, who admitted that this opinion "is kind of selfish."

According to Greenstein, CAPA's decision to debut at Northwestern is unexpected. "It was definitely an odd choice," he said. He believes if CAPA had chosen a football factory such as Oklahoma State, where, he said, players are just discarded if they don't perform, CAPA's testimony to the NLRB might have been stronger.

"At Northwestern, these kids take it seriously, but they're there to get a degree, they're there to get an education [and] they have a mentoring program and they can be all set once they're done [playing football]," Greenstein said, referring to Northwestern's extensive alumni connections.

McNair believes aspects of the NLRB decision could actually be good for a school's image. "If you get injured, you're going to have long-term protection against that injury," he said. Negotiated health benefits would allow a university to say, "We've got these protections for our athletes," he said. "If the parents are there, it may be a good recruiting tool for some schools."

WILL MCKNIGHT//THE SHAKERITE

Junior Melvin Cantrell III bows his head on the bench during the Oct. 4 Shaker vs. Mentor game. At the collegiate level, players often have demanding practice schedules that can interfere with schoolwork.

"I think the NCAA got a wake-up call, got a kick in the rear, that they have to do something they should've done five years ago."

TEDDY GREENSTEIN

Such protections are attractive to Shaker junior and varsity football player Casimier Mitchell. "Players should unionize because, as a Division I player, you need certain benefits because football's a dangerous sport," said Mitchell, who hopes to play football in college.

"It seems to me that Northwestern is going to have to look at the bad publicity and listen to the players and potentially accommodate those concerns," McNair said.

Acknowledging that players have rights will only begin to balance the power in college football. It will allow students to make their voices — and not just their touchdowns — heard.

Players might actually get to be students, not just exploited laborers. Their educations might actually take precedence if their skulls aren't throbbing from the latest pileup and their bodies aren't exhausted from 50- or 60-hour football weeks. Maybe they'll actually have time to use the books paid for by their work.

Shaker head football coach Jarvis Gibson isn't sure that a union is the best choice to address problems. With unionization, coaches would have less control over their programs, he said. "There are too many factors when you bring a union."

Even if the union does not materialize, the NLRB decision will force change within the NCAA and associated institutions. "I think the NCAA got a wake-up call, got a kick in the rear, that they have to do something they should've done five years ago," Greenstein said. "There's no doubt this is getting everyone's attention, and even if the vote does fail, there will be some overdue change."

This movement extends beyond Evanston, Ill. The leaders seek to revolutionize unfair and oppressive NCAA rules.

Alex Putterman, assistant sports editor of The Daily Northwestern, recognizes its potential impact. "It's huge, I think," said Putterman. The unionization movement's leaders "probably don't even care too much about how it goes at Northwestern or if the NLRB upholds the ruling, because whether or not Northwestern chooses to unionize, it will apply to everyone."

The dynamic of a unionized team wouldn't dismantle coach authority, it would just allow players decent lives. Shaker football player Mitchell believes that the if the players had fewer practice hours, say 40 instead of 50, they could focus more on school work.

Ari Ross

Ultimately, union or no union, players' rights are strengthened as the NCAA faces even just the threat of unionization. Already, they've voted to ensure DI players' meal plans adequately cover their appetite--with unlimited food supply. University of Connecticut point guard Shabazz Napier won't have to go to bed hungry now.

It's these ideas that scare not just Northwestern, but the whole NCAA. If players have more rights, they might start asking for compensation for their extensive injuries, or more time for their studies.

What an outrage!

2013 Shaker graduates Jack Nemeth and Andrew Rossman hold posters at the annual Chief Wahoo protest. Protesters compared the Chief Wahoo logo to any other bigoted mascot, saying that it promotes racist values and furthers disrespect of Native cultures. "I went there [to the protest] because I wanted to show my disapproval because we had the Holocaust, and [our] people were dehumanized by these caricatures," said Nemeth. "And this propaganda and this Chief Wahoo is the same thing because in America we took their land--[the land of] people who didn't really have choice of us coming there."

AMERICAN INDIAN MOVEMENT

Drunken Insults, Racial Slurs . . . It Must Be Opening Day in Cleveland

Shaker students joined activists for Opening Day ritual, protested Indians' continued use of Chief Wahoo logo

MARCIA BROWN MANAGING EDITOR

As Cleveland geared up for another Indians season, others prepared for the annual protest against the use of Chief Wahoo. Each year on opening day, a group of activists gather outside the gates of Jacobs—sorry—Progressive Field. The mascot doesn't quite reflect the stadium name.

"I really love the community and I want to make it more of a place of equality for everyone," junior Sophy Warner said. Warner loves the diversity of both Shaker and Cleveland communities. She spoke warmly about the participants in the protest and reserved judgement of those who yelled in her face.

It was Warner's second year with the protesters, who stood in the pouring rain and progressively colder weather from 1 p.m. until the game started a few hours later. It was a smaller turnout this year than in previous years--about 20 people. Nevertheless, the protest earned the most press this year, according to Warner. Indeed, the use of Native American mascots has drawn more media attention this year; the the Plain Dealer editorial board condemned the use of Chief Wahoo, and the Washington Redskins owner's fierce defense of his team's mascot has been prominent.

The American Indian Movement formed in 1973 and began these annual opening day protests. April 4, 2014 was just a continuation of those efforts. Warner attributes this year's smaller numbers to a shrinking Native American population in Cleveland.

Sophy Warner

The intensity of the opposition has not decreased, however.

"We'd stand, and sometimes people would come up and ask questions or yell at you," Warner said. "Some people would stop and look and read [our posters]. Some people would take pictures."

Other onlookers weren't as open-minded. Some yelled insults in the protesters faces. "Lots of the [yellers] were drunk, but some of them were definitely not," Warner said. "But they'd be with their buddies and they'd yell, 'Keep the chief!'"

The hecklers didn't leave it at that. "Some people said, 'You're not even Native American. Why are you doing this?'" Warner said. She retorted: "I think it's important that anyone who is being oppressed should be defended."

Warner has always been interested equality. While not involved in the Student Group on Race Relations, she is a part of Gay-Straight Alliance and other groups centered on equality. "The changing of the name is so important for the Native Americans, and I think it's something that should be changed because it looks bad for Cleveland, too," she said.

Warner isn't the only Shaker student who has participated in these protests. Jack Nemeth, a Shaker graduate, participated in 2013.

Nemeth is adamant that Chief Wahoo has the same racial implications as any other slur. "What if it was called the Cleveland Negroes, and people painted their faces black? Or if it was called the Cleveland Jews and people put big noses on? And it's really hard to imagine that, too," he said. The Indians logo dehumanizes Native Americans, the people "we should have utmost respect for," Nemeth said.

The National Association for the Advancement Colored People, mirroring Nemeth's opinion, passed a resolution

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

"What if it was called the Cleveland Negroes and people painted their faces black? Or the Cleveland Jews and people put big noses on?"

JACK NEMETH

JOSH JACOBS//THE SHAKERITE

AMERICAN INDIAN MOVEMENT

Fans walk past the annual protest against the use of Chief Wahoo on Opening Day 2013 Jack Nemeth ('13), who attended, and junior Sophy Warner encoutered opinions they deemed insensitive and insulting.

"I think a lot of the problem is a lot of people don't understand. So I just try to explain to people why [the logo] is not a good representation and it's demeaning."
SOPHY WARNER

concerning mascots and the treatment of Native peoples in the media. "The use of Native American people, images, symbols and cultural and religious traditions as sports names, logos and mascots perpetuates racist stereotypes and undermines the self-determination and dignity of Indian people; and. . .Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the National NAACP calls upon all members and friends to refrain from purchasing items with Native American sports team logos, and to cross out such logos on merchandise already in their possession," the resolution states.

Jack Nemeth

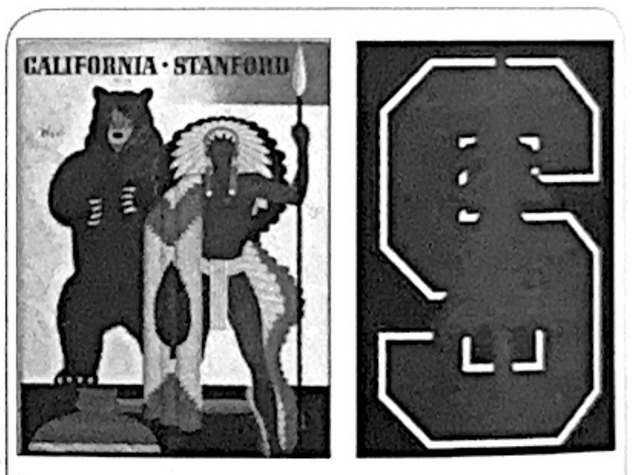
These widespread harms to native peoples' self-esteem and cultural traditions are well-documented by several sources.

The National Congress of American Indians names "Ending Harmful Mascots" as a priority, one they've been working on for more than 45 years. The congress cites such mascots as most harmful for Native youth. "When exposed to these images, the self-esteem of Native youth is harmfully impacted, their self-confidence erodes, and their sense of identity is severely damaged," the organization states on its website. Not only is self-esteem lost, but suicide rates are higher for Native Americans than any other ethnic group, at 14.3 per 100,000 people, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. The Native American population is 5.2 million, according to the 2012 Census.

Warner allowed that there has been some progress. The Chief Wahoo logo today is less derogatory than in the past. The grinning mascot uses less pronounced "native" features and its skin is an unnatural red. The ballclub also uses a "C" for Cleveland in some of its merchandise. "The symbol has made a lot of money, but the Native Americans don't see this money," Warner said. "The ballpark sees the money." Warner added that the Cleveland Native Americans cannot afford to fund their pow wows, traditional gatherings of Native American people. Nowadays, native and non-native people meet to celebrate the importance of Native American tradition.

"I think a lot of the problem is a lot of people don't understand. So I just try to explain to people why [the logo] is not a good representation and it's demeaning," Warner said. "Sometimes people won't listen, but other times they will."

The American Psychological Association denounced the use of Native American mascots. Citing research that shows the detrimental effects of such mascots, and how their use furthers racist values, the APA encourages the "immediate retirement" of such symbols and passed a resolution. "The



A 1939 Stanford University football game program illustrates the team's rivalry with the University of California, Berkeley Golden Bears. In 1972, Stanford dropped the Native American mascot and began to call itself the Stanford Cardinal, which referred to one of the school's colors. The Stanford tree is a redwood.

NCAA DENOUNCES MASCOTS

The NCAA evaluated the use of team mascots in 2005, deeming 19 derogatory and offensive. Those teams then changed their mascots.

"As a national association, we believe that mascots, nicknames or images deemed hostile or abusive in terms of race, ethnicity or national origin should not be visible at the championship events that we control," NCAA President Myles Brand said, according to the National Congress of American Indians.

policy is not necessarily that they shouldn't be used but that they should be retired," said Alberto Figueroa-Garcia, assistant director of the APA Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs. "[There is] a detrimental impact for children — not just Native American children. The research suggests that retiring those mascots is good for everyone."

In 2007, the American Sociological Association released a similar resolution, objecting to the use of such mascots as they "reflect and reinforce misleading stereotypes of Native Americans in both past and contemporary times."

Describing the protesters, Warner said that the leaders of the protest are Native American, but many of the other protesters are not. Many were college students, including some from Case Western Reserve University.

Nemeth said he participated in the protest because of his own identity.

"I wanted to show my disapproval because we had the Holocaust, and [our] people were dehumanized by these caricatures," said Nemeth. "And this propaganda and this Chief Wahoo is the same thing because in America, we took their land--people who didn't really have choice of us coming there."

During the protest, Warner encountered opinions she'd never experienced before. Describing one poster protesters used, showing a Jewish person whose features were exaggerated saying "This is a symbol of the Holocaust."

"One person came up to me and said that the Holocaust never happened and that there's never been genocide," Warner said.

Nemeth experienced similar startling reactions. Using a similar sign showing a Jewish person, Nemeth met Jews who disagreed completely with him. Nemeth, who is Jewish, bases much of his anti-Chief Wahoo stance on his own experience.

"There was a kid that I knew, who was a Jewish kid and he was more Jewish than I was," Nemeth said. "He was very upset because he was like, 'How could you show so much disrespect on Holocaust day,' and I said, 'How could you show that much disrespect on Holocaust day [to] Native American people who are living there."

He cites widespread support for the Indians team in the Jewish community in Cleveland, but believes the community isn't sensitive enough. "It seems like Jews forget the Holocaust movement—not—[that they're] self-hating, but to me it shows a lot of ignorance and a lack of a ability to logically think about how racism is affecting people today."

Like most protesters, Nemeth believes that the times are changing quickly, just as people's attitudes toward such causes as gay marriage. "In 200 years our technology changed, and people's attitudes are changing very fast, ideas change very fast," he said. "Why is having a logo more important than respecting a people?"

Even President Bill Clinton, before the objections were widespread, rejected the Indians' mascot. In 1994, when he threw out the first pitch at Progressive Field, he used "a home-team cap and jacket of a style seldom seen after the Indians reinstituted a logo into the 1970's featuring a Chief Wahoo," the New York Times wrote. "That made Mr. Clinton the only one on the field adorned in the old-fashioned block C, a step that a White House aide said he had taken 'in recognition of the sensitivities' aggravated by a team that still calls itself the Tribe."

Twenty years later, the team still uses the mascot, fans still defend it and protestors' objections haven't faded.

Nemeth's impression of the protestors in 2013, was similar to Warner's. "First, it's well known that people go to pre-game, but people were walking by [and] yelling, 'You're not one of them,' 'We should have killed the rest of you' and 'The Fighting Irish is outrageous, too,' " Nemeth said.

"It was just very disturbing to me to see that probably out of the 10 people I talked to, one person stopped to have civilized conversation with me."

"In 200 years our technology has changed, and people's attitudes are changing very fast, ideas change very fast. Why is a logo more important than respecting a people?"

JACK NEMETH

STEREOTYPES STICK IN SPITE OF EVIDENCE

Dr. Tiffany Townsend, previously an assistant professor at Georgetown University Medical School and Penn State University, is senior director of the Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs at the American Psychological Association.

Tiffany Townsend

How did you start with the APA?

I was attracted to the position because of the goals and mission of our office. Among other objectives, OEMA advocates for the development of public policies that support the concerns of ethnic minority psychologists and their communities. . . So, while I didn't take the position at APA specifically to take up the cause of retiring Indian mascots, I was very interested in becoming a part of an organization that works to advance issues of significance to communities of color.

Q&A

What kinds of discrimination have you seen evolve, shrink or grow?

Racism and other forms of discrimination . . . are institutional forms of oppression that are long standing and ingrained in our society . . . Since I have only been at APA for two and half years, real change in these forms of oppression has yet to occur, but there is greater awareness of the problem and more professionals, including psychologists are working toward greater equity and inclusion.

Can you explain how mascots are harmful to people's pysches?

Research has found significant negative effects of the use of Indian mascots on not only American Indians, but also broader society . . . the use of Indian mascots damages the self-esteem of American- Indian children and perpetuates negative stereotypes that influence the way in which American Indians are viewed and ultimately treated by others. For those who have limited contact with American Indians, these stereotypes may become the basis for implicit or unconscious bias that may be hard to change even when presented with more accurate images and representations. Implicit bias has been shown to have direct implications regarding discrimination, affecting people's decisions and their behavior toward members of the stereotyped group.

MARCIA BROWN

Want to join The Shakerite?

Of course you do! Not sure? Here are some perks:

- ask the tough questions and get the answers
- see your name in an award-winning news source
- take trips to big cities

Tell your counselor you want to take Journalism I.

In The News: Shooter Drill Goes Awry

SHANE MCKEON

Students literally ran for their lives.

A Cleveland Heights High School principal is on leave after she conducted an active-shooter drill during school hours . . . without telling all students and teachers that it was a drill.

According to the Northeast Ohio Media Group, Administrative Principal Johnetta Wiley was producing a safety video April 2 when she announced to the school there was a shooter in the building.

She made that announcement, though, more than an hour before school began.

Oh, boy.

After she made the announcement, NEOMG reports, students and teachers ran through the halls screaming, convinced there was a gunman in the high school. Many students literally ran from the building, leaving school and going home.

Superintendent Nylajean McDaniel admitted that "some teachers and staff were understandably distressed."

"Distressed" is one word for it.

3-Second Movie Reviews

SHANE MCKEON

Disappointing, like a Browns' game.

USA! USA! USA! USA! Go see it.

Enough With 'Quests'

SHANE MCKEON

Teachers know the rule: your subject area's test day is such, and you shall administer your tests on that day. And yet every year, the guidelines are ignored.

Raider Rant

When students ask teachers why they are straying from their assigned days, teachers will often respond with the most dreaded portmanteau in a student's vocabulary. "It's not a test; it's a quest."

Changing the name does not change the thing described; I don't say, "That homework last night was literally enhanced interrogation techniques." No, that homework last night was torture, and I'm studying for a test, not a quest. Check your euphemisms, y'all.

That Should Be a Word

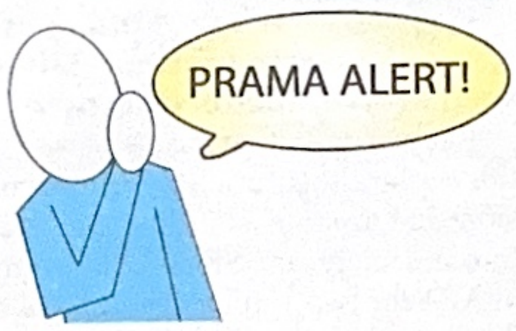
SASHA RAE-GRANT AND BRIDGET COOK

PRAMA

n. Drama originating from or pertaining to prom. Includes drama before, during and after the event.

ex. "It will be the greatest night of your life, so long as you don't let prama get in your way."

see also: *promzilla* (an overly manipulative prom attendee who basks in prama); *promposal* (an excessively elaborate way to ask someone to prom).



One Page
THE SHAKERITE

Heard in the Halls

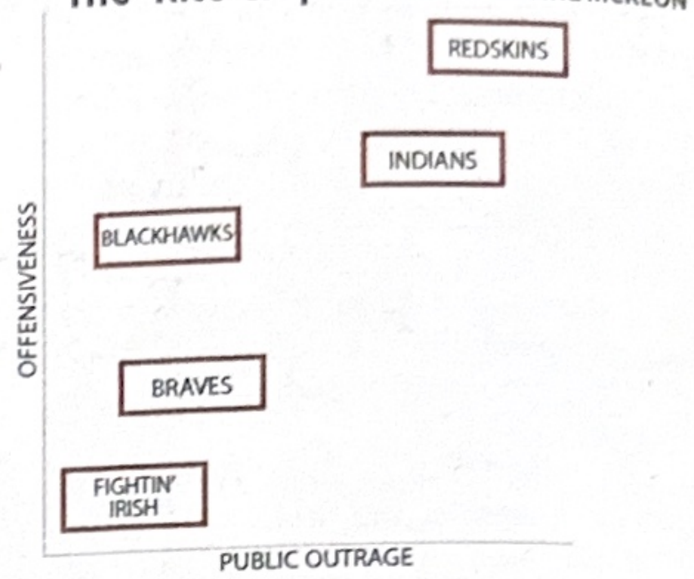
"Why do we even celebrate Earth Day if Mother Nature is going to do this stuff?" *April 15, 1 p.m.*

"The Learning Garden looks lonely." *April 10, 3 p.m.*

"Oh! I really like your hair! Kind of makes you look like a pirate. In a good way!" *March 11, 11:30 a.m.*

The 'Rite Graph: Teams

SHANE MCKEON



Ultra-thorough regression system reveals direct relationship between offensiveness of team names and public outrage stirred. Who'da thought?

Hallway System to Change

DYLAN STRAFFON AND ALEX SMITH

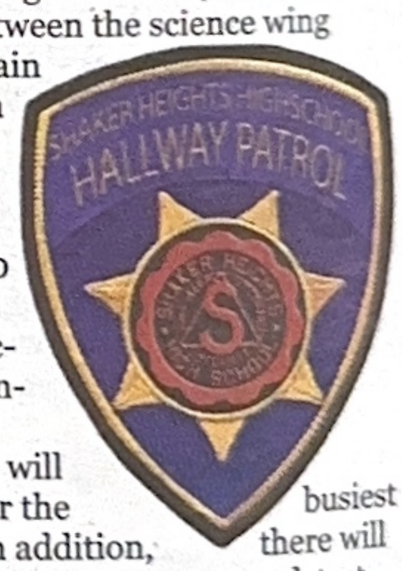
The district plans to implement a traffic system to prevent recurring transportation dangers.

"Although it was an accident, the incident that involved the trampling of a student last week made it clear that changes had to be made," Principal Michael Griffith said, "in order to protect the youth and vertically disadvantaged from facing adversity within our halls."

The system will include a two-lane median in the hallways, along with traffic lights, stop signs and minimum and maximum speed limits.

Security guard George White believes these laws are "great for the school" and "long overdue." "I'm sick and tired of kids running in my hallways with hats on and headphones in," Green said. "I can only say, 'Take that hat off young man,' so many times in one day. No student needs to wear those symbols of delinquency in our halls."

According to Griffith, the intersection between the science wing and the main hallway on the second floor is the main area of concern. "It's one of the top 10 most dangerous hallway intersections in the country," he said.



Traffic lights will be installed near the busiest intersections; in addition, there will be underground weight sensors to detect when students approach.

At press time, students were in a frenzy after plans for hallway speed traps leaked.

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